

How to Spin a Scandal! • Hollywood Scandal Map! • Scandal Hall of Shame!

#951 • AUGUST 31, 2007

# Entertainment Weekly

## THE SUMMER OF SCANDAL!

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+25

Shocking Moments From The Past 25 Years!

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Model Natalie Reid stars in EW's photo  
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in distress; photographed by Gavin Bond on  
Aug. 15, 2007, in New York City





# Feedback



"The 'Bourne' trilogy is one of the best action franchises, and to see its star on EW made my day."

**Stephanie Lazar**  
Columbus, Ohio

## Spy High

I loved your recent Matt Damon cover. As a movie-theater operator, I show so much garbage that Hollywood cranks out. It's a pleasure to be offering a truly fun, entertaining, and fast-moving film.

**Dan Misko**  
Felton, Calif.

I really enjoyed the *Bourne* trilogy, but I'm disappointed that Matt Damon would criticize the James Bond character and franchise after admitting he didn't even see *Casino Royale* ("The Strong Violent Type"). I have two words for Damon: Blockbuster rental.

**Fred Cunningham**  
Simpsonville, S.C.

## In the Twilight Zone

You are right that a 12-year-old would appreciate Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* series (Books). But her audience crosses all ages—that's part of the magic of her books. I am an adult reader, and I love the characters Ms. Meyer has created.

**K.H. Jones**  
Albany, N.Y.

## Happy Together

The Pop of King is a burst-of-happiness thing for me, Mr. King. I turn to the last page of EW each week, and sigh if your byline isn't there. If it is, I feel a frisson of excitement, knowing I'm in for a treat.

**Kim M. Bailey**  
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

## King Con

As one of the creators of Comic-Con International: San Diego, I'm always pleasantly surprised to see it mentioned in mainstream media ("It Came From Comic-Con!"). But to see it on the cover of EW demonstrates just how well-known it has become. The Con is our Cannes! But it's more amazing to recall that back in 1970, it started as a "mini-con" in the basement of San Diego's U.S. Grant Hotel, with 300 funny-book collectors and a handful of vigilant mothers watching over them.

**Scott Shaw!**  
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

## WRITE TO US!

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## Five Fun Things Online

MORE GREAT STORIES ONLINE EVERY DAY



## New Daily Video Show

Need some inspiration to get you through to Friday? Take Five, our new daily series, points you toward cool things worth your time—and *Weeds* is certainly one this week!

## 2. The Best (& Worst!) Lists

Get a new list every day from EW.com, from our favorite fictional domestics (hi there, Alice!) to the fall movies that we can't wait to see.



## 3. Breaking News

More scoops, from Chris Rock's new project to Kenny Chesney's throwdown to 50 Cent and Kanye West.

## 4. Take Our Box Office Challenge

So your Hollywood Stock Exchange portfolio is pushing nine figures? Apply that box office expertise to our weekly pick 'em game! Picks due each Friday by 8 p.m. ET.

## 5. More Scarlett

Take a stroll down memory lane with lovely Scarlett Johansson, from 1996's *Manny & Lo* to *Ghost World* to this week's *The Nanny Diaries*.



## OBSESSIVE FAN OF THE WEEK!

When it comes to Mego (the creator of action figures for Marvel Comics and others), Benjamin Holcomb of Glendale, Calif., wrote the book—literally. A longtime buff of the "charming, cloth-costumed superheroes," Holcomb could never find enough info about the now-defunct toymaker to quell his voracious passion. The solution? Put his social life "on hold for four years" and put pen to paper. "What sets me apart is how my obsession motivated me into life-changing action," he says. Indeed.





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# NEWS+NOTES

EMMY WATCH + KRISTEN BELL RETURNS TO TV + SUMMER'S SMOKIN' BOX OFFICE + AMY WINEHOUSE + MAX ROACH: 1924-2007



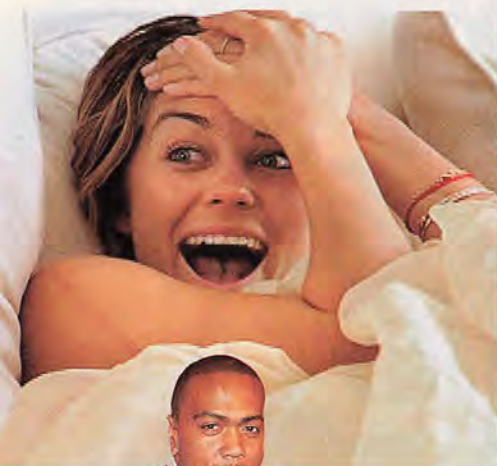
## Facing the Music

A complete overhaul of the MTV Video Music Awards is part of an ongoing tune-up for the network.

BY TANNER STRANSKY

In 2002, MTV sat atop the TV heap. *The Osbournes* was a sensation, the Video Music Awards drew record ratings, and *TRL* was still a crucial teen tastemaker. Problem is, when it comes to young-adult entertainment, 2002 might as well be 50 years ago. Today, the network can't quite seem to recapture the zeitgeist. While viewership is up slightly, hits have been scarce, and competition from YouTube and social networking sites like Facebook has been brutal. Last February, the network began axing some 250 employees in a fat-trimming effort that, according to an internal memo, was designed to help launch "the next great era for MTV." A lofty goal, but to borrow a phrase from that wise sage Hilary Duff,





Clockwise from above: VMAs "maestro" Timbaland; *The Hills'* Lauren Conrad; former Palms residents and *The Real World: Las Vegas* cast members; and Carson Daly with Shakira during *TRL*'s glory days in 2001

how exactly do those layoffs help MTV avoid becoming "So Yesterday"? MTV president Christina Norman freely admits that the 26-year-old network could use a tune-up. "Reinvention almost feels too small," she says, "because it's like you're done—and I don't think we're ever done."

For starters, the network's flagship award show, the VMAs, is getting a big makeover. "Our plan was to put a stick of dynamite in it, light the fuse, and blow it up," says Norman. "I think we were sort of getting a little stuck in tradition, which seemed odd. Music is changing constantly." Last year's telecast saw a troubling 50 percent drop in viewers from its 2002 high. The Sept. 9 telecast will film at the Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas (site of both the infamously raunchy *Real World* season and the recent cast reunion) with Timbaland as its so-called music "maestro." (A source close to the network confirms that Britney Spears plans to make an appearance.) And after years of endlessly repeating the ceremony—and likely diluting its viewership—the show will air just once. The traditional auditorium setup has also been scrapped. Performances and award handouts will now be captured by cameras located throughout the Palms. Executive producer Jesse Ignjatovic says the overhaul allows artists to "do things that they wouldn't do on any other show." Well, he *is* copying one show: The booze will flow as freely as at the Golden Globes.

So that's two hours of programming down, but how about the rest of the schedule? Lately, the network has counted on a scattershot mix of throw-away dating shows and reality series about spoiled brats who drink, fight, hook up, and cry. It's easy to see why MTV went in that direction. The formula worked for *Laguna Beach* and its follow-up, *The Hills*, whose season 3 bow drew a series high of 3.8 million viewers on Aug. 13. But its appeal is

limited. The latest premiere of *The Real World*, for example, was down from previous seasons. So MTV will soon shake up its reality-dominated lineup with the fall launch of *Kaya*, a scripted series—its first in five years—about the tribulations of a young rocker, played by *Heroes'* Danielle Savre. "Our audience is going to see this as completely relevant," says Norman. "It's a good story."

Sounds like a plan. But media insiders worry about MTV's online presence. "Not getting in earlier was a problem," says Michael McGuire, an analyst at the tech-research firm Gartner.

"Advertisers want to believe in the brand—it's still superstrong, but online? It's kind of a blip right now," Norman's out to change that perception, too. Viewers will be able to vote online for their favorite moments and unaired outtakes from the VMAs; the winning clips will be remixed for a customized version of the show that will then air on the channel. And on Aug. 21, MTV Networks announced that it would merge its struggling digital-music subscription venture, Urge, with RealNetworks' Rhapsody service in a clear effort to take on iTunes.

That sounds more promising than a now-shelved initiative to make over afternoon video-countdown classic *TRL*—which has seen its viewership plummet 37 percent since longtime host Carson Daly exited in 2003—into *YouRL*, an Internet-based participation-driven version. Norman says she remains "committed to *TRL*," but is mum on how she plans to fix it. At this point, though, some question whether revamping it is worth the trouble. "*TRL* has probably served its purpose," says Horizon Media analyst Brad Adgate. "If they're just going to play videos that you can get in different platforms on demand, well, then...their work is cut out for them." To which Norman replies, Bring it on. Reinvention, she says, "is part of our DNA." ■

**"Our plan was to put a stick of dynamite in it, light the fuse, and blow it up."**

—MTV president Christina Norman about the VMAs



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*The Office*; (below)  
*Ugly Betty*'s  
America Ferrera  
with Silverman

## Credit Check

Those annoying onstage group hugs at the Emmys are about to be a thing of the past. Here's why. **BY LYNETTE RICE**



***Ugly Betty* has 20-plus producers; only 11 will be given an Emmy if it wins.**

**A**nd the Emmy goes to...well, see, that's where things get complicated. A newly announced rule by the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences now limits the number of writers and producers who can receive an award if their program notches a victory in the best-show categories. (The edict allows 11 recipients for a comedy win and 10 for drama.) Trouble is, shows like *30 Rock* and *Ugly Betty*—both of which are up for an Outstanding Comedy statuette—have 20 or more producers listed in the credits, and that includes some non-writing personnel who no longer participate in the day-to-day production of the series. The most glaring example: recently installed NBC Entertainment co-chairman Ben Silverman and executive VP Teri Weinberg, both of whom produced ABC's *Ugly Betty* and NBC's *The Office* while also operating Silverman's independent company, Reveille Productions.

While Silverman and Weinberg will both be allowed to receive a statuette if *Betty* or *The Office* wins, it's unclear whether either of them will actually take the Emmy stage come Sept. 16. To be one of those lucky few, nominees must now justify their eligibility—in writing—to the TV Academy. But that's hardly consolation for the few writers who could go home without a statuette despite their show winning. And the Academy can only be so sympathetic. Says ATAS senior VP John Leverence, "A lot of people with great SATs and great grades apply to Harvard but not everybody gets in."

## HITLIST

By Scott Brown

**1 Pro wrestler to be on *Survivor*** *I hope this doesn't affect the credibility of reality TV.*

**2 Judge congratulates Lohan's parents on "extraordinarily good judgment"** *Was this a real judge? Or just Judge Reinhold again?*

**3 Cartoon Network characters to begin eating healthier food** *The network also encourages its Adult Swim viewers to use only organic, fair-trade pot.*

**4**

**Jewelry, including one gold chain, stolen from Hulk Hogan** *The Fed needed something to guarantee our currency last week.*



**5 House stars call off engagement** *At first they thought it was cold feet. But the cold feet just turned out to be symptoms of deep-vein thrombosis.*

**6 Stripper poles from *Sopranos*' Bada Bing club being auctioned** *Those poles with strippers still on them will go for more.*

**7 Universal Music now making legal mix-tapes** *Keep in mind, it's been working on these tapes since 1986, so they've got, like, embarrassing amounts of Peter Gabriel on them.*



**Janeane Garofalo joins the cast of *24*** *Using waterboarding, she will extract the truth about cats and dogs!*

**8**

**9 Steven Seagal reportedly blames FBI for ruining his career** *The FBI wrote 'On Deadly Ground'?*

**10 Kevin Federline to star as cocky singer on *One Tree Hill*** *He's been feverishly watching old Brian Austin Green footage to prepare.*

For all the latest headlines, pictures, and ridiculous Hollywood miscellany, visit [popwatch.ew.com](http://popwatch.ew.com)



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# Saved by Kristen Bell

The *Veronica Mars* starlet resurfaces with a role on NBC's *Heroes*. BY VANESSA JUAREZ

If playing Veronica Mars for three years didn't solidify her placement at the center of the geek universe, then this surely will: Kristen Bell will appear on NBC's *Heroes* this fall for a multi-episode arc. "Saying you're a nerd is now the cool thing to do," notes Bell, 27, who also plays a *Star Wars* fanatic in *Fanboys* (out January 2008) and headlines next summer's *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, from producer Judd Apatow. "The fansites are obsessed with her.... It's [her] very approachable charm," explains *Fanboys* director Kyle Newman. Quips *Marshall* co-producer Rodney Rothman, "I guess she's cornered the market on losers. The girl's got chops, man." And she can also speak for herself. Without further ado...

**EW What's life been like since *Mars*?**

**KB** Right after *Veronica Mars* wrapped [in April], I left for Hawaii [to film *Marshall*]. I was on cloud nine, obviously, because I was getting to work with Judd Apatow's group. I'd really wanted to be a part of that very small pool of lucky actors.

**EW What's the film about?**

**KB** It is about a guy whose girlfriend breaks up with him, and they'd [had] this trip planned for Hawaii and neither of them thinks the other is going to take advantage of it. So they [end] up in Hawaii; she's with her new boyfriend, and chaos ensues.

**EW Sounds like it was a change from *The CW*.**

**KB** I was knee-deep in improv. Being able to come up with my own stuff and [being asked], "What would you like your character to do here?" It was a lovely experience.

**EW The Apatow films are doing really well. For a while, it was nothing but PG-13 comedies.**

**KB** I have the mouth of a sailor. I have to remember not to drop F-bombs when I'm ordering my lunch. Nothing is supposed to be offensive about it, it's just meant to be real.



**EW So tell us about *Fanboys*.**

**KB** These *Star Wars* nerds drive cross-country to break into George Lucas' ranch and steal a print of [*The Phantom Menace*] so that their friend with a terminal illness can see it before it comes out.

**EW You sort of have fanboys of your own. Are you happy about that?**

**KB** I'm really flattered. I love nerds. Comic-Con junkies are the tastemakers of tomorrow. Isn't that funny? The tables have turned. They're a fiercely intelligent audience, which makes filmmakers want to please them. But I'm looking for the fangirl to come out of her shell a little, to be more accepted.

**EW All right, you've held out long enough: What's up with *Heroes*?**

**KB** I'm on a sugar high, to be totally honest. For me, starting a new project is kind of like switching high schools—that feeling of excitement and nerves. And because everyone is so nice and I know so many people involved, I feel like I'm switching high schools—but one that a lot of my friends have already transferred to.

**EW You're kind of the go-to girl these days. You're also narrating *The CW*'s fall drama *Gossip Girl*. And we hear that *Lost* was trying to scoop you up?**

**KB** I'm flattered that I would even be considered for the other roles. [But] I was really excited when there was the prospect of working in town and on one of the best shows on television. There comes a point where I'd like to fall asleep in my own bed.

**EW What can you tell us about your role?**

**KB** [Elle] comes in with a bang. She's a bit of a criminal in the beginning. I'm not even sure if they know whether she's going to be bad or good. She has a link to H.R.G. and Peter. She becomes integral to the mystery on the show.

**EW Did you have to do a table read or go out and audition for the producers?**

**KB** No, I didn't. Doesn't that feel like I'm on another planet? It's flattering. Everyone has the right to see actors audition [so] they get what's right for their projects. But when you have someone coming to you saying, "I know you're right," it just makes you blush. I'm over the moon. ■  
(Additional reporting by Adam Markovitz)





Clockwise from left: *Superbad*'s Jonah Hill and Michael Cera; *The Invasion*'s Kidman and Jackson Bond; *The Bourne Ultimatum*'s Matt Damon

# Warming Trend

As a winning summer season reaches the finish line, some lovable nerds—and one buff superspy—come out on top. **BY NICOLE SPERLING**

**G**ive it up for the misfits! As Hollywood nears the end of its summer box office blitz, it's the odd ducks—like the boys of *Superbad*, *Hairspray*'s zaftig Tracy Turnblad, and the entire *Simpsons* clan—who've helped give the movie business the boost it needed to make this sweltering season a potential record breaker. The business has now posted six straight weeks of year-to-year gains, culminating in *Superbad*'s better-than-expected \$33 million opening, which outpaced Judd Apatow's previous summer bow (*Knocked Up*) and blew away Nicole Kidman's *The Invasion*, which stalled at \$6 million.

Chalk it up to smart counterprogramming: Not only did the well-reviewed raunchfest arrive during the usually barren mid-August stretch, it also appealed to the industry's rabid Gen-Y fans. Says Sony Pictures vice chairman Jeff Blake, "It's a sign of some real

clout by this group [that] their brothers and sisters in Generation X were really never able to generate." That clout—not to mention the star power of Zac Efron—has also helped *Hairspray* hang on nicely after five weeks.

It just crossed the \$100 million mark, a significant milestone in the hard-to-gauge musical genre. *The Bourne Ultimatum*, meanwhile, notched the best-ever August opening (\$70 million) and proved that not all threequels have to be mind-numbing, F/X-laden spectacles. It's now poised for a \$200 million-plus gross.

At this rate, the industry, which is seeing the highest attendance since 2004, is ready to fete a summer that will likely exceed a whopping \$4.1 billion (up from \$3.9 billion in '06). Says Fox distribution president Bruce Snyder, "Every year we look for constant growth in a mature business. It doesn't seem right, but we're not very smart."



## The Shaw Report *By Jessica Shaw*

| IN                 | FIVE MINUTES AGO | OUT                          |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Vigilantes</i>  | <i>Spies</i>     | <i>Thieves</i>               |
| Jonah & Michael    | Brad & George    | Chuck & Larry                |
| Last-minute shares | Staycations      | Taking the entire summer off |

## DEAL REPORT

### TELEVISION

➤ After seven years on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, **James Marsters** is becoming a detective—for a five-episode arc on *Without a Trace*. "The



FBI calls him to help [on a case]," says Marsters. "In dramatic fashion, they stumble onto something bigger than expected." Of course they do.

### MOVIES

➤ **Scarlett Johansson** and **Jennifer Aniston** have joined *Big Love*'s Ginnifer Goodwin in *He's Just Not That Into You*, a comedy based on the guide to understanding men. Johansson's also in negotiations to star in *The Spirit*, along with **Eva Mendes**.

### STAGE

➤ Director **David Leveaux** is reviving *Cyrano de Bergerac* with **Kevin Kline** and **Jennifer Garner**. The classic follows a cadet (Kline) who's afraid his big schnozz will scare



away his beloved Roxane (Garner). "I was thinking of a Roxane who would [be] fearless," says Leveaux. And if there's one thing we all know about Garner after watching her on *Alias*, she's exactly that. —Vanessa Juarez



# Monitor

## ENGAGED



On Aug. 20, actress **Laura Linney** (*The Nanny Diaries*), 43,

and boyfriend Marc Schauer announced that they plan to marry....

Backstreet Boy **Howie Dorough** and his girlfriend, real estate broker Leigh Boniello, both 33, will wed later this year.... Comedian **Jimmy Fallon**, 32, popped the question to producer Nancy Juvonen, 40, whom he met on the set of 2005's *Fever Pitch*.

## SPLIT

*House* costars **Jennifer Morrison** and **Jesse Spencer**, both 28, called off their engagement on Aug. 15. Said the pair in a statement: "We are still very close, and we look forward to continuing to work together on *House*."

## INJURED

Nine extras on the set of *Valkyrie*—the **Tom**

**Cruise** WWII drama currently shooting in Germany—were taken to a hospital after they fell off the back of a truck while filming a scene in Berlin on Aug. 19. Only one was admitted. Cruise, 45, was not involved.

## HIRED



*American Idol* emcee **Ryan Seacrest**, 32, has been

tapped to host the 59th Primetime Emmy Awards on Sept. 16 in L.A.—a role he'll also assume for the pregame entertainment portions of Fox's Feb. 3 Super Bowl broadcast.

## SIGNED

Former ICM co-president **Ed Limato**, 71, whose clients include Denzel Washington and Mel Gibson, joined the William Morris Agency on Aug. 16. Limato left ICM after 19 years following his demotion in July.



## MAX ROACH 1924–2007

One of the last remaining titans of modern jazz, drummer **Max Roach** died of complications from Alzheimer's disease on Aug. 16 in Manhattan. During his six-decade career, Roach developed an inimitable percussion style, and collaborated with legends like Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Miles Davis. Says Blue Note Records president Bruce Lundvall: "He was a visionary who explored every frontier of contemporary music from free jazz to hip-hop." —**Leah Greenblatt**

## COURTS



**Foxy Brown** (née Inga Marchand), 28, was arrested

Aug. 14 for allegedly assaulting neighbor Arlene Raymond, 25, in Brooklyn. Police say Brown hit Raymond in the face with a Black-Berry because she complained about the

rapper's loud car stereo. Brown, who was released on \$5,000 bail and is slated to appear in court on Sept. 26, could not be reached for comment.... Writer-director Fritz Jünker, 31, sued **David Arquette**, 35, and Arquette's company Coquette Productions, Inc. for copyright infringement on Aug. 15 in L.A. Jünker, who seeks an unspecified amount, claims his 2002 film, *The Truth About Beef Jerky*, was the basis for Arquette's 2006 horror film *The Tripper*. "This is a frivolous lawsuit which has no merit," says Arquette.... On Aug. 15,



rapper-producer **Dr. Dre** (né Andre Young), 42, sued to prevent his former label,

Death Row Records, from selling the rights to his 1992 album *The*

*Chronic* in an L.A. bankruptcy court. He claims the record company forfeited its option on the best-selling album when it refused to pay him royalties. "We intend to file a motion to dismiss," says a lawyer for Death Row.

## DEATHS

Emmy-winning broadcasting pioneer **Chet Collier**, 80, of complications from diabetes, Aug. 15, in Wellington, Fla.... Bebop trumpeter **Herb Pomeroy**, 77, who played backup for Frank Sinatra, of cancer, Aug. 11, in Gloucester, Mass.... TV writer **Max Hodge**, 91, creator of the TV version of *Batman's* Mr. Freeze character, of natural causes, Aug. 17, in Woodland Hills, Calif. —**Adam Markovitz and Lindsay Soll, with additional reporting by Stewart Allen**

## Time-Out of the Week

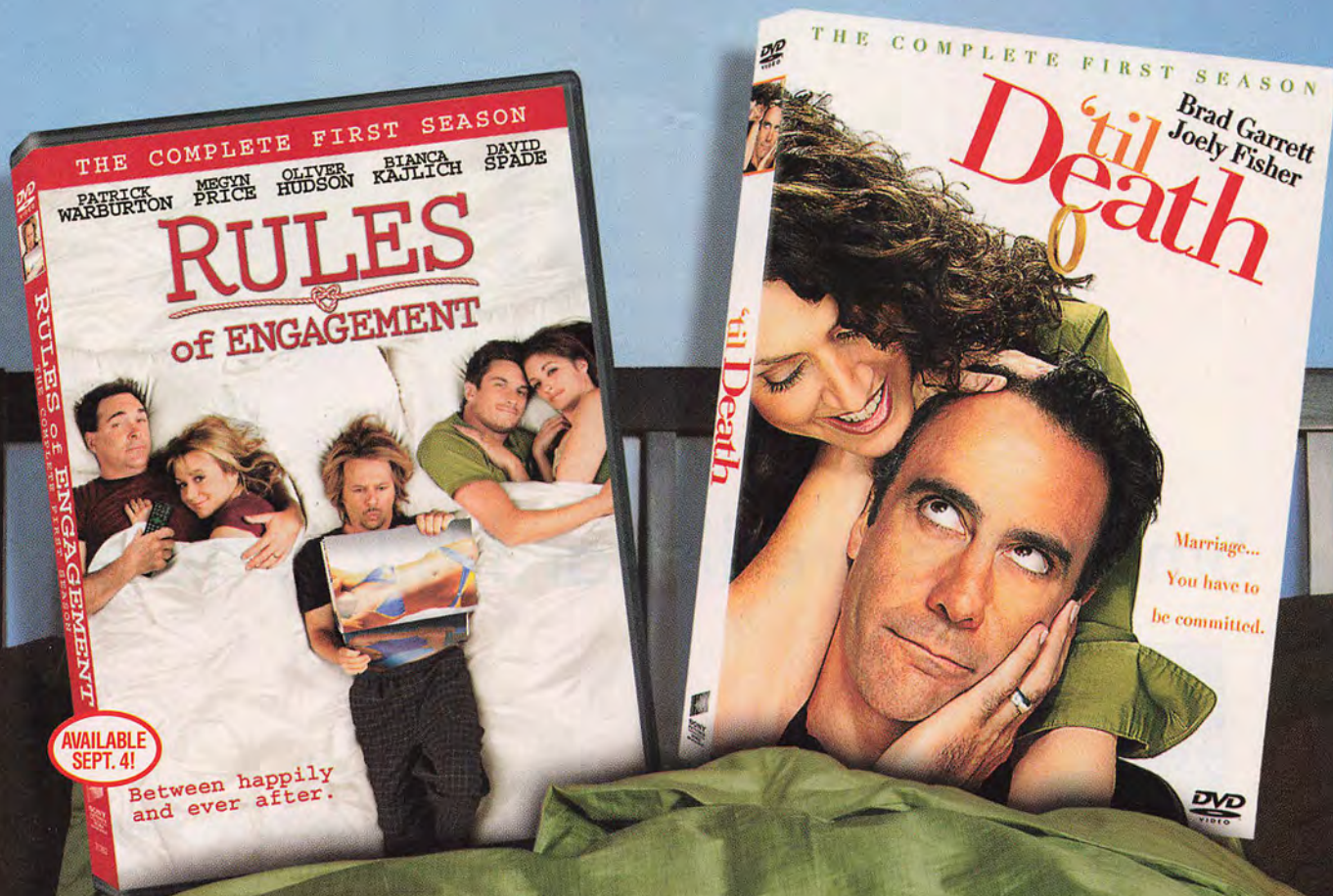
Amy Winehouse's battle with the rumor mill got a little nastier last week when reports surfaced that she had entered rehab in England. Her rep will only say that the singer has been resting since her Aug. 8 hospitalization, but Winehouse stoked further speculation when she canceled her remaining August and September tour dates. "Plans are being made to reschedule her U.S. tour for early 2008," says her rep. "Amy is working with medical professionals to address her health." Still unclear: whether she'll appear on Sept. 9's MTV VMAs, where word has it she and Gnarls Barkley belter Cee-Lo were planning to sing the R&B classic "Ain't No Mountain High Enough." —**Simon Vozick-Levinson**





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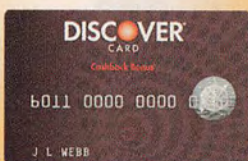
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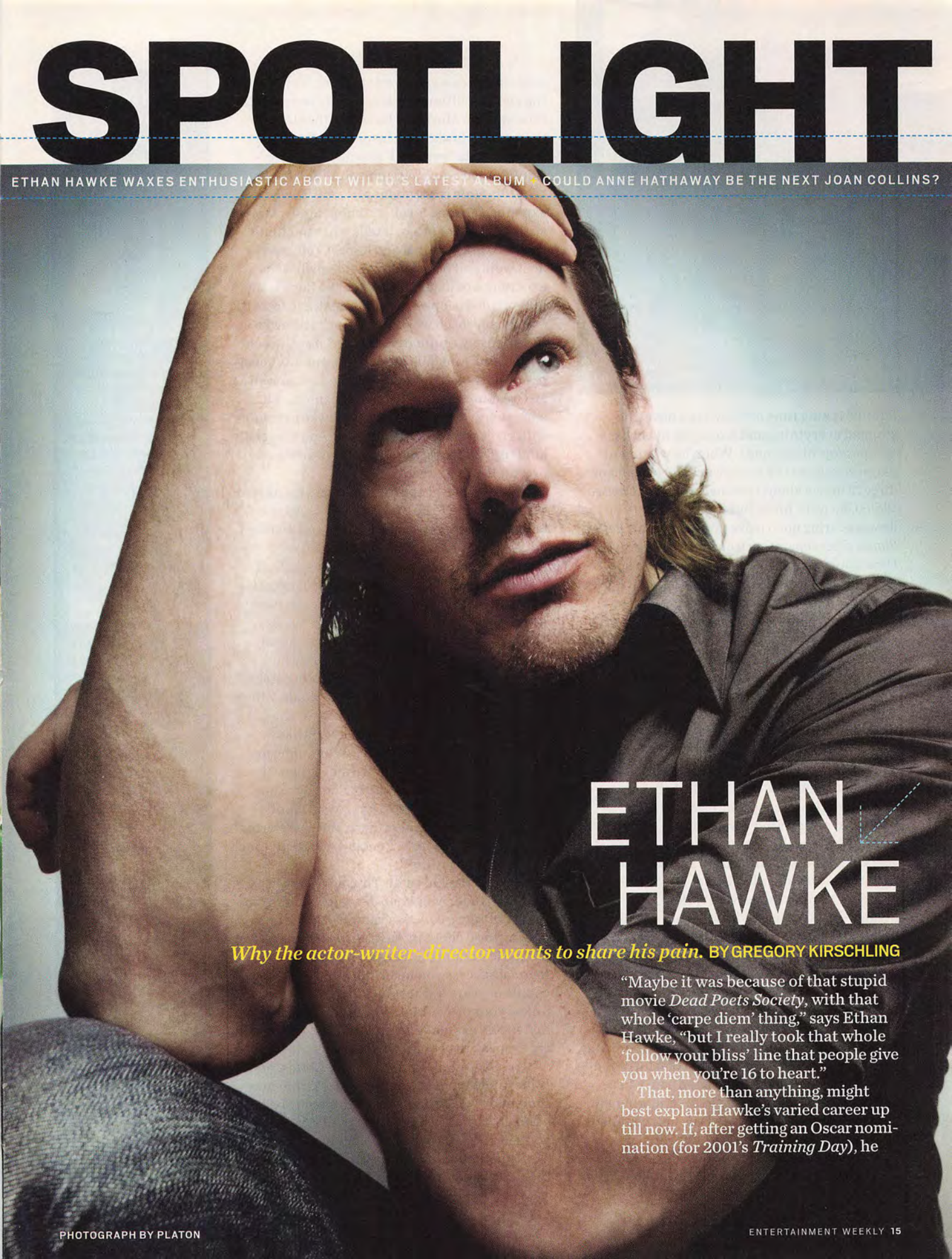
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# SPOTLIGHT

ETHAN HAWKE WAXES ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT WILCO'S LATEST ALBUM • COULD ANNE HATHAWAY BE THE NEXT JOAN COLLINS?



## ETHAN HAWKE

*Why the actor-writer-director wants to share his pain.* BY GREGORY KIRSCHLING

"Maybe it was because of that stupid movie *Dead Poets Society*, with that whole 'carpe diem' thing," says Ethan Hawke, "but I really took that whole 'follow your bliss' line that people give you when you're 16 to heart."

That, more than anything, might best explain Hawke's varied career up till now. If, after getting an Oscar nomination (for 2001's *Training Day*), he





Hawke directs  
*The Hottest State*

felt like taking time off to write a novel, he stopped everything and wrote the novel (*Ash Wednesday*, his second). When he wanted to play a cokehead Off Broadway (*Hurlyburly*) or direct a movie about the Chelsea Hotel (*Chelsea Walls*), he went for it. But four years ago—just as he was gearing up to make 2004's indie hit *Before Sunset* after separating from his wife of six years, Uma Thurman—Hawke lost his creative spark and started to wonder how he could get it back.

"Around the time of *Before Sunset*," he says, "I just didn't know who I was anymore. I had gotten so depressed that I couldn't find the joy any longer. But working with Rick [Linklater] and Julie [Delpy], my old friends from *Before Sunrise*, helped me a lot. And since the theater was my first love, and there's something humbling about the theater, I just went back there. I wanted to touch my own past a little bit. It all coincided with a sense that I needed to rebuild myself after my divorce."

So, by choice, the last couple of years of Hawke's life have been spent "low to the ground," dedicated primarily to roles in the New York theater—most recently, he received a Tony nomination for his work in Tom Stoppard's *The Coast of Utopia*—and also to directing the indie-movie adaptation of his 1996 semiautobiographical novel, *The Hottest State* (in theaters now). In person, the 36-year-old is like a college student who never finished college—garrulous, philosophical, willing to hang out and keep rapping. Sitting over a bowl of fruit-laced muesli in the same neighborhood café where he's been coming since he was 22, and where he wrote portions of *State*, Hawke is upfront about how the film is taken from his own life.

"It's a personal movie, my favorite kind," he says of *State*, which chronicles the doomed love

affair between a young actor (Mark Webber) and the girl who ultimately crushes his heart (Catalina Sandino Moreno). In telling the story for the screen, Hawke took inspiration from one of his favorite "personal" movies, Bob Fosse's thinly veiled autobiographical *All That Jazz*. "*Hottest State* is a student of *Jazz*," Hawke explains. "On one level, it's a hopelessly narcissistic film. On another, it tells you something really, really personal and honest and tries to do it well, and be naked, and share what the experience of living life is like. The hope is that like-minded people will gain something from it."

That approach worked just fine for Hawke in the intensely ruminative *Before Sunset*, which netted him, Linklater, and Delpy scores of sensitive twenty- and thirtysomething fans, as well as an Oscar nomination for the screenplay. That approach also sometimes gets Hawke in trouble with critics who, for instance, weren't especially kind to *The Hottest State*, or to Hawke for even presuming to write it.

"I think some people think Ethan's calculated: 'Oh, he's trying to be this or that,'" says Linklater, a close friend since they first collaborated on *Sunrise* in 1994. "But a guy like Ethan honestly isn't working for anyone's approval. I swear to God, the guy just follows his artistic muse. He does it to do it, and he doesn't care where the chips fall."

Since bottoming out a couple of years ago, Hawke sounds like he's finally getting back his footing. Asked if he felt vilified by the tabloids, which pointed the finger at him for the breakup with Thurman, Hawke replies, "Oh, God, yes!" but indicates life has settled down since then. "I mean, nobody starts a family to not have it work out," he says. "The disappointment is there. But I've started to feel better. I'm kind of back in touch with my life."

His kids with Thurman—Maya, 9, and Levon Roan, 5—will visit him on the set of *Daybreakers*, a vampire movie he's leaving to go shoot in Australia later this afternoon. He's hoping it'll be the kind of big commercial success you need in Hollywood every couple of years if what you really want to do is follow your proverbial bliss and make more *Before Sunsets* and *The Hottest States*, films that try to speak to people one-on-one.

"I just hope," he says, "that *The Hottest State* is the kind of movie where, 10 years from now, somebody will be going through a really bad breakup, and a friend of theirs will say, 'Have you seen *The Hottest State*?' and they'll say, 'No,' and they'll slide in the DVD together, and then talk about it all night. That's my dream." ■

## Ethan Hawke's Essentials

The album, film, and epic novel that thrill him most



### 'SKY BLUE SKY,' WILCO

Hawke, a fan of frontman Jeff Tweedy, loves Wilco's latest. "It starts with a happy little guitar riff and the line, 'Maybe the sun will shine today.' I felt like, 'He's happy!' And I thought, 'I am too!' Corny, but I love him."



### 'REDS'

"I remember when I was 18, I thought I would make a movie like *Reds* someday. Now I'm almost as old as Warren Beatty when he made it. Not quite, but I'm nowhere close to doing something that good. How am I going to do it? Do I still hope I can? I don't know."



### 'ANNA KARENINA,' LEO TOLSTOY

"If you haven't read this, stop what you're doing and read it. The greatest book ever written. It's what you want when you put on a new record, or go to church—it's what you want at 3 a.m. or 12 in the afternoon."



## The EW Pop Culture Personality Test

# JOAN COLLINS

Name

Joan Collins will forever be known as Alexis Carrington, that delicious diva who joined *Dynasty* in season 2 (out now on DVD) to dress up and throw down—most famously with costar Linda Evans. And when the two took the stage comedy *Legends!* on tour last year, the antics picked up where they left off, only behind-the-scenes, claimed Collins in a British tabloid last month. (Evans had no comment.) Still, if stranded on a desert island, Collins says she would not choose to eat “Lips Evans.” Then again, as she says, “I am a vegetarian.” —Mandi Bierly

### 1. The last movie I saw in the theater:

‘Live Free or Die Hard.’ I’m a big Bruce Willis fan, and I’ve seen all the movies, like, five times each.



### 2. You’re forced to raid one of these people’s closets. Whose do you choose?



(A)  
Dolly Parton



(B)  
Elizabeth Taylor



(C)  
Elton John



(D)  
Paris Hilton

No! No! No! I’d rather go naked than be in any of those clothes. Just give me a gunnysack and I’ll put a big belt around it.

### 3. If I were a *Desperate Housewives* guest star...

I think it’s time Edie has a mother or aunt or meddling friend who lives down the street—if she’s still alive, that is.

### 4. Pick a Beckham:



(A)  
Victoria



(B)  
David

For what? I love Victoria. I saw her program, ‘Coming to America.’ She’s very witty, self-deprecating. I get her.

### 5. Which actress should play you in your life story?

Maybe Anne Hathaway. She could play 17. You’d have to go from 17 up to 103!



### 6. The secret to a great soap opera entrance is:

Shoulders back, chest out, sunglasses on. And whip them off with great gusto. That’s what seemed to work.

### 7. Choose one:



(A)  
James Dean



(B)  
Elvis Presley



(A)  
Helen Mirren



(B)  
Judi Dench

We were just at Graceland.... Ashtrays everywhere and shag rugs.... Fantastic.

I belong to the Academy. I’m not gonna tell you who I voted for! They are both great.

### 8. The last time I looked at my naughty pictures:

Strangely enough, I went to my safe deposit box yesterday, and I found all the outtakes that the great photographer George Hurrell took for ‘Playboy.’ But I don’t really look at the spread.



### 9. The role I should have had:

That woman from the Ministry, Dolores Umbridge, in ‘Harry Potter.’ Imelda Staunton was terrific, but I would’ve been good.



### 10. My porn name is:

Spider + Harley = Spider Harley

Childhood Pet Hometown Street



# SUMMER OF SC

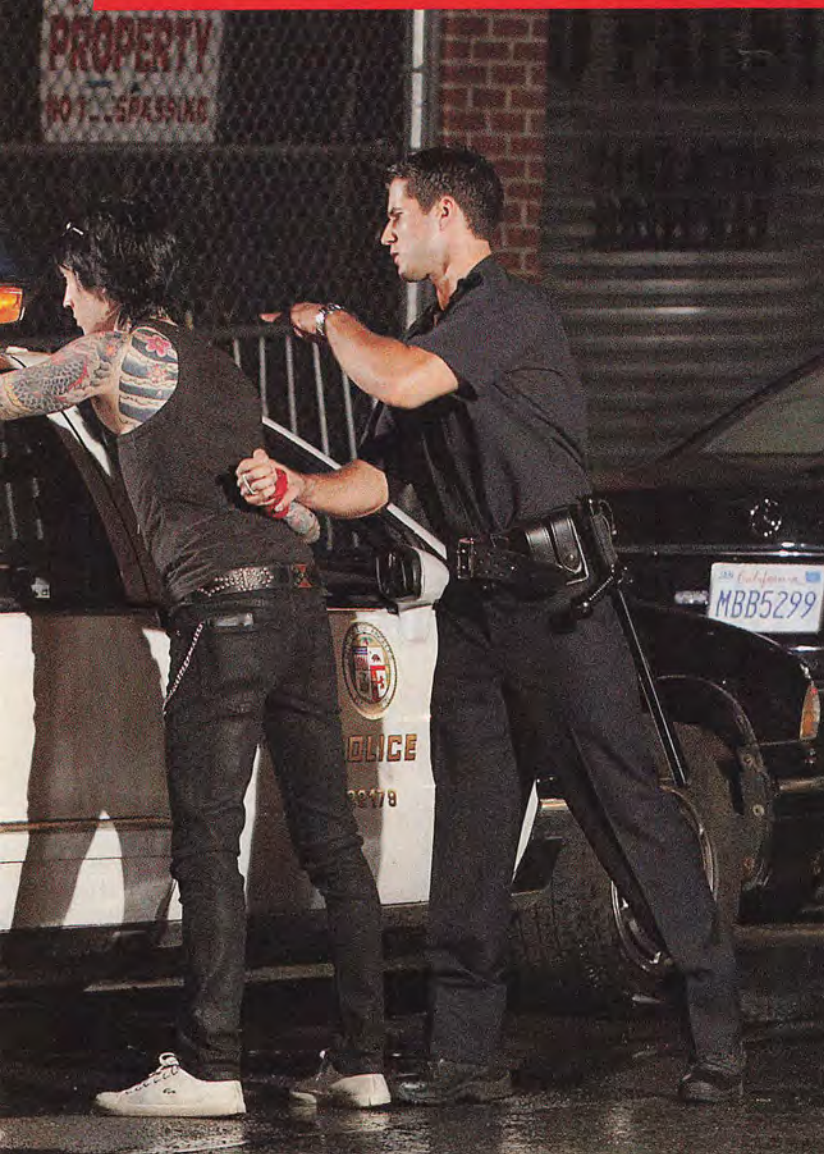


You have the right to remain scandalous... EW's photo dramatization of a familiar Hollywood scene.



# ANDAL!

REMEMBER WHEN THE IDEA OF AN EARTHQUAKE SEPARATING CALIFORNIA FROM THE REST OF US SOUNDED LIKE A BAD THING? THESE DAYS, SO MANY STARS ARE MELTING DOWN THAT IT'S TAINTING HOLLYWOOD AND HURTING ITS BOTTOM LINE. JUST HOW BAD IS THE DAMAGE? **BY SEAN SMITH**



**Any second now**, something shocking will happen. A star will say something racist. A starlet will enter or exit rehab—or jail. A beautiful person will cheat on another beautiful person. Some heartthrob will be caught with a call boy. An over-the-hill actor will be videotaped drunk. An offending body part will be flashed. Arrests will happen. Careers will be destroyed or resurrected. Outrage will be expressed.

Guaranteed.

Every generation believes it is living in the Age of Scandal. There was the Renaissance. The Reformation. The Roaring '20s. Don't even get us started on ancient Rome—Brangelina can't hold a candle to Antony and Cleopatra. And Greek mythology reads like the dishiest blog ever. (Hera never could keep Zeus satisfied. And Narcissus? *Totally gay.*) So while we can't claim to be living in the first, or most epic, scandal era ever, there's zero doubt that our 21st-century media have flung us into the fastest, most relentless period of public shaming in human history. "In Los Angeles, we've created 24/7 paparazzi packs," says Ross Johnson, a crisis consultant. "They roam the streets like wild dogs. And anyone who's recognizable can be under attack at any moment." Racks of celebrity tabloids, hundreds of gossip blogs, affordable handheld video, and an entire nation of camera phones have created a climate of constant surveillance and a culture of insta-infamy. "In the old days, a scandal could be suppressed by a studio lawyer and never reach critical mass," says one studio exec, who, like others, insisted on anonymity.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAVIN BOND



"Now, if there's even an audience of one to something a celebrity says or does, it can become a scandal in a nanosecond." One top-flight publicist couldn't agree more: "I think this Internet crap is killing the business."

In this environment, everything from a minor traffic violation to an extramarital affair ricochets around the blogosphere with equal "OMG!" breathlessness. Four young women—Paris, Lindsay, Britney, and Nicole—have led the charge, racking up more scandals in 2007 than Liza Minnelli has over her lifetime. (And Minnelli's résumé includes at least one gay husband, a drug habit, and two hip replacements.) "We seem to have entered the age of the bad girl," says one longtime executive. "In the '70s we had the bad boys—guys like Jack Nicholson, Warren Beatty—and an occasional black-widow type, but this is something new. I don't know if these girls are trying to outdo each other or what."

Regardless, it's seriously unwise career planning. Scandal may make you famous, but it doesn't make you bankable. Something as benign as, say, jumping on Oprah's couch can have serious business implications. Less than a year after Tom Cruise hopped up on that sofa—and later took issue with Brooke Shields' treatment for postpartum depression and lectured Matt Lauer about psychiatry—*Mission: Impossible III* opened at \$10 million below its predecessor. Coincidence or consequence? Didn't matter. Viacom head Sumner Redstone publicly blamed Cruise for the film's subpar performance and severed the star's relationship with Paramount. When Meg Ryan split with husband Dennis Quaid after a fling with Russell Crowe, her

**FF**  
**In the old days, a scandal could be suppressed," says an exec. "Now, if there's even an audience of one, [something] can become a scandal in a nano-second."**

movie with Crowe, *Proof of Life*, opened to her lowest gross in five years. She hasn't had a hit since. (And speaking of Crowe, that phone-throwing incident didn't help the box office of *Cinderella Man*.) Don Imus and Isaiah Washington both lost their jobs for saying something stupid. The Dixie Chicks initially lost album sales for saying something smart. And did *A Mighty Heart* open at an anemic \$3.9 million because of its tragic subject matter, or because people blame star Angelina Jolie for the end of Brad Pitt's marriage? Almost certainly the former, but who's to say for sure?

What is certain is that scandal played at least some part in every one of these cases and cost the people and companies involved millions of dollars. Lindsay Lohan seems done for—for now—not because of her frequent visits to rehab, but because all that media attention didn't attract audiences to her films; it repelled them. Her DUI arrest derailed the marketing campaign for *I Know Who Killed Me*, and the industry took notice. "From that moment on, all the publicity around the film shifted," says a movie marketing exec. "The press just wanted to write about how her career was over. Her behavior hurt that campaign." Lohan's biggest successes were *Freaky Friday* and *Mean Girls*, both of which predate her debut as a blogarazzi icon. Now, in articles like this one, her name is used in the same sentence as Paris Hilton's, whom one handler calls a "celebrity." In any case, the more "famous" Lohan has become, the worse her movies have done.

That axiom has been proven again and again. The Bennifer romance/breakup generated massive profits for the tabloids and *lost* millions for Sony when

## A TIMELINE OF (ALLEGEDLY) BAD BEHAVIOR

Perhaps it's global warming, but suddenly this summer, stars of all types are having a hard time staying out of the spotlight.

**5.2** Coley Laffoon files papers seeking custody of his child with soon-to-be ex Anne Heche, claiming she is an unfit parent. Heche's rep calls Laffoon's claims "lies."



**5.21** Lane Garrison (*Prison Break*) pleads guilty to vehicular manslaughter and drunk driving in a Dec. 2 car accident that killed a teen passenger. Sentencing is set for Oct. 31.



**6.3** Paris Hilton sneaks out of the MTV Movie Awards early to begin serving her 23-day sentence at a Los Angeles county jail for violating probation after a reckless-driving offense.



**7.5** *ER* star Goran Visnjic is sued by a Croatian woman from his hometown of Sibenik who claims he fathered her baby daughter.

**4.25** Hugh Grant is arrested for allegedly attacking a photographer with a container of baked beans. Charges are never filed.



**5.5** *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* host Ty Pennington is arrested by West L.A. police for driving drunk. It's a "wake-up call," says Pennington, who pleads no contest.



**5.26** Lindsay Lohan is arrested for an alleged DUI after crashing her Mercedes into a curb on Sunset Boulevard. Her handlers immediately admit her to rehab.



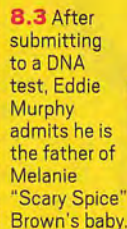
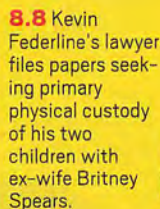
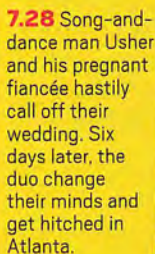
**6.28** Rapper Eve pleads no contest to a misdemeanor drunk-driving charge stemming from an arrest on April 26.





**"We seem to have entered the age of the bad girl," says one insider. "I don't know if these girls are trying to outdo each other or what."**

the film and television business, but it has created a separate media empire of its own. Scandal, like sex, sells. And it's reshaping our culture at the speed of DSL. Of course, all that flash and noise can make it difficult to distinguish serious scandal from harmless gossip, so EW decided to investigate which 25 scandals of the past 25 years have had the biggest impact on the business and the celebrities involved. (If you're curious to see which catastrophes almost made the cut, you'll find Nos. 26 through 50 on EW.com.) Some stars had so many scandals—e.g., Michael Jackson, Madonna, Lohan—that we were faced with option paralysis. To make things easier, we asked EW readers to pick each star's single most significant scandal, and we've published the results here as well. And just in case you think nothing juicy happened before 1982, we've included a scandal Hall of Fame—trust us, Winona Ryder's got *nothing* on Fatty Arbuckle. For fun, there's even a map showing where in Los Angeles certain infamous events took place. (Take a tour the next time you're in town!) This is not to say that we are, you know, reveling in celebrity pain. We care. As do the industry executives who have to deal with these celebrity dramas. "After 20 years in this business, I've never met a movie star who wasn't trouble *without* a scandal," says one veteran exec. "They're all pains in the ass because they're scared s---less of losing their youth, appeal, and power. However, there are some scenarios I wouldn't wish on an enemy." Yep. Turn the page and let the nightmares begin. ■ (Additional reporting by Jeff Giles, Vanessa Juarez, Nicole Sperling, Christine Spines, and Tim Stack)





# THE 25 BIGGEST SCANDALS

**OF THE PAST 25 YEARS** FROM DON IMUS TO DIVINE BROWN, WE COUNT DOWN A QUARTER CENTURY OF SHOCKING CELEBRITY MOMENTS

# 25

READERS' CHOICE

## MADONNA PUSHES HER OWN BUTTONS!

**What is Madonna's most scandalous moment ever?**

**44%**

*Simulates masturbation on stage during 1990's *Blond Ambition* world tour*

**18%**

*Releases her *'Sex'* book on Oct. 21, 1992*

**15%**

*Files adoption papers for a Malawian boy named David Banda in October 2006; public controversy over perceived special treatment for the star erupts*

**14%**

*Confessions Tour sparks controversy in 2006 for using religious symbols such as a crucifix and a crown of thorns*

**9%**

*Music video for 1990's "Justify My Love" deemed too sexually explicit for MTV*

Her Madgesty's hyphenate could easily read "singer/actress/pisser-offer of the powers that be." And on the massively successful *Blond Ambition* tour in 1990, Madonna's antics—including simulated masturbation on stage—angered Pope John Paul II and the Vatican, who publicly condemned the singer's unholy performance. On the Canadian leg of the tour, Toronto police even threatened to arrest the Material Girl for indecency. In response, she cheerfully included "the fascist state of Toronto" in her preshow prayers (as captured in the 1991 tour doc *Truth or Dare*)—and refused to alter a thing. **CAREER IMPACT: POSITIVE** The papal disapprobation only enhanced her taboo-taunting persona. The same year, she released a greatest-hits collection, as well as a little single called "Vogue."

# 23

## KATE MOSS LOSES GIGS OVER DRUG DRAMA!

In September 2005, in what some might call a career "high," the waify supermodel was featured on the front page of Britain's *Daily Mirror* allegedly snorting cocaine. Moss' extremely lucrative fashion contracts (including H&M, Chanel, and Burberry) quickly disappeared as sponsors reacted with shock—shock!—at the spectre of drug use invading the fashion industry. (Due to lack of evidence, Moss was not charged.) **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** Following a public apology and a rehab stint, Moss reestablished a few of her old deals, and inked a number of new ones. She has also recently debuted a well-received clothing line for London's trendy Topshop.



## 24 WHITNEY HOUSTON WASTES AWAY!

On Sept. 7, 2001, one month after signing a \$100 million record deal with Arista, Houston shocked audiences at the *Michael Jackson 30th Anniversary Celebration* concert with her alarmingly gaunt appearance. Speculation was rampant: Was Houston—whose prior studio album had sold a disappointing 2.8 million—anorexic? On drugs? In 2002, the singer sat down with Diane Sawyer and admitted to past drug use, but declared: "Crack is wack." **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** This episode was one among Houston's many career setbacks, including being fired from an Oscar performance in 2000, and a weird 2005 reality show with husband Bobby Brown. Today the singer—who arrived looking glam and healthy at a pre-Grammy party in February, and who filed for divorce from Brown last year—is recording a new album with Clive Davis.





22



## O.J.'S FAKE TELL-ALL GOES BUST!

On Nov. 14, 2006, Fox announced a two-part interview with O.J. Simpson, tied to the release of *If I Did It*, a fictional tell-all that HarperCollins exec Judith Regan gave Simpson a hefty fee to write—about the hypothetical details of how the ex-football great might have killed Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. Within the week, a wave of protests from Fox affiliates, the victims' families, and a disgusted public drove News Corp. (parent company of Fox and HarperCollins) to cancel the bizarre endeavor. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Regan was fired on Dec. 15. Meanwhile, a judge awarded the book rights to Goldman's family to help satisfy their \$33.5 million civil-suit decision against Simpson, and on Aug. 14, Beaufort Books announced a deal with the family to publish the *totally made-up tale*: It's due out Oct. 3.



## 21 ROB LOWE: SEX-TAPE PIONEER!

During the 1988 Democratic convention in Atlanta, Rob Lowe picked up two gals (ages 22 and 16) at a club, invited them back to his hotel, and videotaped the romp. Naturally, the home movie leaked out—and grainy footage of the Brat Packer in action made the tabloid-TV rounds. The underage girl's mom sued Lowe, but it was settled out of court, and no charges were filed. (He agreed to perform 20 hours of community service.) **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** After a brief rehab stint for alcohol addiction in 1990, the star went on to wink at the incident in his work, including the 1999 *West Wing* pilot—in which his character, a presidential aide, unwittingly sleeps with a hooker. As Lowe noted in 2000, "At the height of my downfall, I was still making a million bucks a picture."

## 20 COURTNEY LOVE'S BABY SHOCKER!

Choosing a favorite Courtney Love scandal moment is kind of like picking your favorite Beatles record: So...many...choices! Must...stay...focused! But there is one moment Love-ologists find universally shocking. After a 1992 *Vanity Fair* article suggested she was knowingly using heroin while pregnant, Love denied it, insisting that she sought medical help and quit as soon as she found out. Three years later, she told Barbara Walters she only used in the first month of pregnancy. **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** On April 12, 1994—four days after her husband, Kurt Cobain, was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound—Love's band Hole released their most successful album to date, *Live Through This*. Today, Frances Bean is a healthy 15-year-old, but her mom (who hasn't released a new album since 2004) gets more attention for her yo-yo-ing weight than her music career.



## ROSIE QUILTS 'THE VIEW'!



19

O'Donnell's reign over *The View* ended exactly the way it should have: in a split-screen shout-off with conservative cohost Elisabeth Hasselbeck. The impassioned, uncomfortable, please-go-to-commercial-now tiff embodied everything that made O'Donnell's stay on the chatfest so riveting. For nine ratings-boosting months, the former Queen of Nice unveiled a new TV persona—now with 50 percent more liberal outrage! She feuded with The Donald, criticized national institutions from the White House to *American Idol*, openly discussed her gay marriage, and even held a hungover Danny DeVito on her lap. **CAREER IMPACT: POSITIVE** After the blowup, O'Donnell—who had already given notice—quit three weeks early. The ongoing and intense speculation over her next move demonstrates that even an angry Rosie is an in-demand Rosie.





## 18 ROSEANNE'S STAR-MANGLED NATIONAL ANTHEM!

When Roseanne Barr took the mound at San Diego's Jack Murphy Stadium to sing the national anthem on July 25, 1990, nobody expected an aria. But they weren't prepared for the 55-second caterwaul she unleashed, either. And they definitely didn't anticipate her final flourish, in which she grabbed her crotch and spit. The mockery left the audience in jeers, and even President Bush (the elder) called the performance "disgraceful." Barr apologized, but remained defiant. "The whole thing is a huge statement on America. The reaction more than the act," she later said. **CAREER IMPACT: POSITIVE** That fall, Barr's landmark ABC sitcom returned for a third Emmy-nominated season, bolder and better than ever.



## 17 PORNO FOR PEE-WEE!

Sometimes even a kids'-show host needs to sit back, relax, loosen his bow tie...and take in a triple feature of porn. On July 26, 1991, *Pee-wee's Playhouse* host Paul Reubens had such a night out in Sarasota, Fla., leading to his arrest for indecent exposure. (He pled no contest and paid a fine.) Save a self-mocking MTV appearance two months later ("Heard any good jokes lately?"), Reubens laid low for the next decade. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Reubens' comeback with 2001's *Blow* was overshadowed by a second arrest in '02, after photos of nude teens were found in his L.A. home. (He pled guilty to possession of obscenity, but maintained the photos were "vintage erotica.") This fall, Reubens has a recurring role on ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, and he's also written scripts for two more Pee-wee movies.

# HALL OF SHAME

Sex! Stabbing! Erotic vagrancy! No one did scandal like old Hollywood. Below, the top five eyebrow-raising, headline-grabbing incidents perpetrated by the silver-screen set. BY TY BURR

### Fatty Arbuckle's wild party

**1** Second only to Charlie Chaplin in popularity, silent-screen comedian Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle signed a \$3 million contract with Paramount in 1921, and decided to celebrate. At the end of a now legendary San Francisco hotel party, 25-year-old bit player Virginia Rappe lay dying, and witnesses said she blamed Fatty for raping her. Rumor compounded upon rumor, all gleefully printed by the tabloid press. After two hung juries, a third acquitted Arbuckle, but his career had been dealt a fatal blow.

### Lana Turner's kid kills Mama's lover

**2** When 14-year-old Cheryl Crane stabbed Johnny Stompanato with a kitchen knife as he fought with her movie-star mom in 1958, the modern media scandal came of age. The inquest was filmed for TV, and Turner delivered one of her finest performances, nearly collapsing on the stand. It was ruled justifiable homicide, and Turner's 1959 film, *Imitation of Life*, was a huge hit.

### Roman Polanski flees the country

**3** On March 10, 1977, the *Rosemary's Baby* director invited 13-year-old Samantha Gailey to an

L.A. photo shoot, gave her champagne (and, allegedly, quaaludes), and had sex with her. Polanski pled guilty to unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor, then fled to France before his sentencing. When he won the Best Director Oscar for 2002's *The Pianist*, Harrison Ford accepted the award. Polanski remains a fugitive from U.S. justice.

### Errol Flynn's statutory-rape trial

**4** The star of *The Adventures of Robin Hood* loved women, and they loved him right back. So in 1942, when he was charged with having sex with Betty Hansen, 17, and Peggy Satterlee, 15, the trial was a winking diversion for a war-weary public. The defense

portrayed the girls as morally lax groupies, and the actor was acquitted. Soon after, the phrase "in like Flynn" entered the lexicon.

### Liz Taylor's love life

**5** For a good half decade, La Liz was a one-woman scandal factory. After third husband Mike Todd's 1958 death, she set her sights on his best friend, singer-actor Eddie Fisher—that is, Debbie Reynolds' husband. Fisher got a quickie divorce and married Taylor the same day; three years later, she ditched him for her *Cleopatra* costar Richard Burton. (The Vatican newspaper charged the actress with "erotic vagrancy.") Burton and Taylor wed in 1964, divorced a decade later, remarried in 1975, and split again in '76.



Taylor, Fisher, and Reynolds



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READERS' CHOICE

## LINDSAY'S CAR-CHASE CHAOS!

Most of Hollywood saw this tipping point coming a mile away: Early in the morning on July 24, Lindsay Lohan was arrested for alleged DUI (her second in as many months), driving with a suspended license, and cocaine possession. (She claimed she was innocent and the drugs were not hers.) All this came only 11 days after a 45-day stint in rehab. The 21-year-old, due in court Aug. 24, could face time behind bars. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Lohan—reportedly in rehab again—saw her latest flick, *I Know Who Killed Me* (released three days after the arrest), open with only \$3.5 million, while her next project, a biopic of tango legend Carlos Gardel, may have to dance on without her if jail time becomes a reality.

**What is Lindsay Lohan's most scandalous moment ever?**

**73%**

Arrested for alleged DUI and cocaine possession on July 24, 2007

**12%**

Enters rehab for a second time this year after being photographed passed out in the passenger seat of an SUV in May 2007

**8%**

Provocative knifeplay photos featuring Vanessa Minnillo hit the Internet in June 2007

**6%**

Scolded by 'Georgia Rule' producer in very public letter for lack of professionalism in 2006

**1%**

Admits to past drug use and bulimia (in 'Vanity Fair') in 2006



## 16 DON IMUS FOULS OUT!

Racist, misogynist, and homophobic slurs were not uncommon on Don Imus' nationally syndicated radio show. But when the shock jock called the Rutgers women's basketball team "nappy-headed hos" on April 4, the vulgarity of his words—aimed at a group of accomplished college athletes, no less—enraged the public, and made many advertisers jump ship. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** After MSNBC pulled its simulcast of *Imus in the Morning*, CBS Radio canceled the show outright. The impact may be short-lived, however: On Aug. 14, Imus reached an undisclosed settlement with CBS, and is reportedly plotting a return to radio.

## MICHAEL RICHARDS' RACIST RANT!

When *Seinfeld*'s Michael Richards took the stage at L.A.'s Laugh Factory on Nov. 17, 2006, the audience was probably hoping for Kramer-ish pratfalls and copious arm-flailing. What they got instead was a racist diatribe directed at a group of African-American hecklers. Thanks to a cell-phone camera, the tirade immediately hit the Web, earning the actor nationwide condemnation. Three days later, Richards appeared via satellite on David Letterman's show, apologizing and pledging to seek help.

**CAREER IMPACT: MINOR**

Richards hadn't acted on screen since his eponymous sitcom was canceled in 2000. While on a spiritual journey in Cambodia last month, he told the *L.A. Times* that he has quit stand-up comedy.

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## MILLI VANILLI LIP-SYNCH LIE EXPOSED!

The supposed curse of the Best New Artist Grammy reached its apex in 1990, when Rob Pilatus and Fabrice Morvan—a.k.a. Milli Vanilli—were stripped of the award after producer Frank Farian revealed that the two men were professional lip-synchers who hadn't sung one note on their chart-topping debut album. Apparently, 11 million fans *can* be wrong. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** The duo became a worldwide punchline—not to mention an indictment of the music industry's increasing interest in image over content. Repeated attempts to launch legitimate careers failed; Pilatus overdosed in an apparent suicide in 1998.



## 12 ISAIAH MOUTHS OFF—SHOOTS SELF IN FOOT!

Just when you thought the drama on ABC's *Grey's Anatomy* couldn't get more overwrought, it did—behind the scenes. It began with an October 2006 dustup between Isaiah Washington and Patrick Dempsey in which the former allegedly referred to gay costar T.R. Knight as a "faggot." The incident was close to fading from public memory until Washington dropped the f-bomb again (as part of a denial) in front of reporters at the Golden Globes in January. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Even after he attended anger-management training and shot an anti-hate-speech PSA, the network told Washington in June that his services at Seattle Grace were no longer needed. In July, however, NBC gave him a five-episode gig on this fall's *Bionic Woman*.

# HOW TO SPIN A SCANDAL

Behind every celeb meltdown is a publicist who has to clean up the mess. Two PR experts tell EW how they'd handle our ridiculously salacious—and fictional—celebrity scandals. **SCENARIOS BY SCOTT BROWN**



### PR EXPERT NO. 1

is a press agent and senior record-label exec who has represented artists for more than 30 years



### PR EXPERT NO. 2

has worked as a personal publicist to the stars for 24 years

### Scenario One

23-year-old Actress X, who plays a clean-cut 16-year-old detective on The Tween Channel's *Nicey McClean Jeans*, releases her first direct-to-video movie. Unfortunately, it's a homemade porno, which was slipped to a producer by a disgruntled ex-boyfriend. Legal action is being pursued, but the tape has already spread through the Internet like chlamydia.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 1

Actress X can easily survive the release of the old clichéd "tragic homemade porno direct-to-video movie" (*thpdtvm*, as we call it in the trade). As long as she has the suits at The Tween

Channel supporting her, stays away from wild partying, and does some red carpets (preferably with a reputable and good-looking guy) where she looks majestic, smiley, and not guilty. No mea culpas necessary. She needed to do something to feed her family of seven little brothers and sisters. Oh, yes, her agent needs to get a great feature film for her, which would be announced as soon as possible, and her press agent needs to buy her a 12-pack of underwear just to be on the safe side.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 2

She would have to do an interview with a reputable, compassionate broadcast journalist for a morning





show, like a *Good Morning America* or *The Early Show*. We'd need Diane Sawyer or Meredith Vieira. Only a woman! And she'd have to tell the truth: The boyfriend released it, this is a terrible thing, and, you know, she's horrified that this came out. Because she's a role model, she'd hope that the youth of America would take notice of what has happened to her and never put themselves in that kind of position. Contrition is always best.

### Scenario Two

Oscar-winning Hollywood icon Actor N drunkenly stumbles on stage at the Laugh Factory, wrests the mic from Jon Lovitz, and begins a rambling "Asians can't drive" routine that culminates in a protracted mime reenactment of the Korean War. When police arrive to drag him away, Actor N refers them to "the lawyer who lives in my pants." His one phone call is to Chuck E. Cheese, where he orders 5,000 pizzas to be sent to the home of Daniel Dae Kim. On top of all this, he appears to be doing a Charlie Chan impression in his mug shot.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 1

It's tragic that a disgruntled

ex slipped a drug into his Diet Coke that night. Nevertheless, he's got to take the rap because someone caught it on their iPhone. He must get down on his knees to apologize—facing East, of course—and this ought to happen on network TV. I recommend *Nightline*'s Cynthia McFadden because she brings gravitas to the table. It's such a long shot that one can return from this kind of disaster, so an authentic apology is key here. He must also get a new lawyer—preferably Korean. Pay the huge Chuck E. Cheese bill and go on to host the upcoming 2008 Olympics in China—that would be just the right touch.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 2

You'd have to make a public apology to the entire Asian-American community. And do not go back to the scene of the crime! The guy was arrested, so maybe there's some community service involved. You make sure that's where he teaches tolerance in the public schools. And a nice antiracism PSA couldn't hurt either.

### Scenario Three

Production on *Li'l Mother Teresa* comes to a mysterious halt after

fun-loving Starlet A shows up late for the fifth shooting day in a row. In statements released to the press, she cites creative differences, but the producers and crew publish their own account in a full-page *Variety* ad, describing her tardiness, mood swings, and charming habit of stopping scenes to gargle Robitussin-tinis. The producers don't want to fire her—they'd rather shame her into shaping up—and she really needs the job: It's a prestige picture with Oscar potential.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 1

Didn't her press agent warn her to stay away from Robitussin-tinis and Jägermeister? Starlet A better realize that there's a long line of ingenues right behind her. Enough with the cocktails. Yoga, Pilates, triathlons, nutritionist, facials, Kaballah—the healthy route to get the serotonin to kick in. Befriend absolutely everyone on the set—homemade cookies (not laced with hash) for cast and crew. Updates on her astounding turnaround are reported hourly. Otherwise, it's back to conducting tours for Homes of the Hollywood Stars.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 2

I'd send her to Betty Ford, and come out publicly and say that's where she is. You get a jet, and get her on that plane if you have to take her there yourself. If I have to, I will drag her by her ear to rehab. When she goes back into production, I wouldn't allow any press on the set because she has to "focus on her work."

### Scenario Four

A reputable paper reports that Lloyd's of London will not insure the next movie starring aging action sensation Hunk B. The whispered reason: Last year, Hunk B underwent an experimental Swedish ab

transplant, where abs from a really smokin' mountain goat were used to replace Hunk B's sagging six-pack. The procedure can have significant side effects, including sudden death, dry mouth, and horns. Hunk B's last two movies have faltered at the box office, and this could be the final nail in his coffin. Making matters worse: It comes out that the goat is a lady, and she's talking. Barbara Walters has the exclusive.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 1

One word: Oprah. Nothing to be ashamed of. Be proud. Show off those abs (think Kirstie Alley modeling her new bod). Talk about the pain of the surgery, the sacrifice for the craft—not unlike an actor gaining 50 pounds for a role. The goat can develop another six-pack with the right personal trainer, which Hunk B has already agreed to pay for, along with a fabulous cottage in Beverly Hills that he also purchased for Ms. Goat.

#### PR EXPERT NO. 2

An experimental what? Medically, that can't even happen! The guy should run for cover because the PETA people will be all over him! Run for cover!





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READERS' CHOICE

## TOM TAKES ON PSYCHIATRY!

What is Tom Cruise's most scandalous moment ever?

57%

Criticizes friend Brooke Shields for advocating antidepressants for postpartum depression; takes on Matt Lauer in a 'Today' show interview

32%

Jumps on Oprah's couch to proclaim his love for his new lady, Katie Holmes

5%

14-year production pact with Paramount Pictures is not renewed

4%

Holmes gives birth to a baby girl named Suri on April 18, 2006, but the baby remains unseen for five months

2%

Dumps longtime publicist Pat Kingsley in March 2004 and hires fellow-Scientologist sister as her replacement

10

Bouncing on Oprah's couch was a little odd, but it was Tom Cruise's leap into a heated debate over the mental-health profession that *really* puzzled fans. In May 2005, while promoting Paramount's *War of the Worlds*, Cruise criticized Brooke Shields for taking antidepressants during her postpartum depression. He then tore into the *Today* show's Matt Lauer, calling him "glib" for suggesting that the ADD drug Ritalin has helped people.

**CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** In August 2006, Viacom chairman Sumner Redstone ended Paramount's relationship with Cruise's production company, citing the actor's "recent conduct." Cruise, now co-head of United Artists studio, will next be seen with Meryl Streep in November's *Lions for Lambs*.

## MARIAH TEETERS ONTO 'TRL'!

All that *Glitters*, it seems, was actually fool's gold for Mariah Carey in 2001. In a surprise appearance to promote her tinselly travesty of a movie, the over-worked pop tart popped into MTV's *Total Request Live* studio pushing an ice cream cart and proceeded to peel off her baggy T-shirt, unveiling gold booty shorts and a tank top. "Every now and then," she told confused host Carson Daly, "somebody needs a little therapy."

**CAREER IMPACT:**

**MAJOR** *Glitter* bombed, and Virgin Records paid \$28 million to buy Carey out of her contract in 2002. Three years later, though, Carey emerged from her shame cocoon as the *Billboard*-topping butterfly who had the best-selling album of 2005 with *The Emancipation of Mimi*.



9



SHIELDS: JOHN SCULLY/WIREIMAGE.COM; CRUISE: ARMANDO GALLO/RETNA; HOLMES AND SURI: CRUISE; ATTITUDE: JONATHAN; TODAY: VIRGINIA SHERROD; ABBY: LUCY NICHOLSON/PA/GETTY IMAGES; PITT AND ANISTON: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM; JOLE: PITT; BAO: FTV/STARFACE/RETNA



## BRAD – JEN + ANGIE = BRANGELINA!

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie already share the unique mutual handicap of being the world's most beautiful movie stars. So when the duo—who both had a knack for on-set romances—teamed up in 2004 for *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*, the gossip industry raised its alert level to red. By March 2005, Jennifer Aniston had filed for divorce from Pitt, and less than a year later—after months of playing coy—Jolie announced she was bearing Pitt's love child. **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** "Brangelina" became a tabloid phenom, but the new couple wisely shifted the focus to their charitable endeavors and ever-growing family (current count at press time: four). Aniston, meanwhile, emerged with copious public goodwill. All three parties continue to look very, very pretty.

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READERS' CHOICE

## BRITNEY'S BIZARRE BUZZ CUT!

Turns out the denim dress she wore to the 2001 American Music Awards *won't* go down as Britney Spears' most unfortunate style decision. On Feb. 16, a visibly distressed Spears paid an after-hours visit to a Tarzana, Calif., salon. After the owner refused to shave the pop star's head, Spears buzzed it herself. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Spears' increasingly erratic behavior continues (most recently when she reportedly partied topless with a music-video extra in a hotel hot tub), further complicating her custody battle with ex Kevin Federline over sons Sean Preston, 23 months, and Jayden James, 11 months. Now the public is more interested in whether the platinum-selling artist will keep her kids than if she'll stage a successful comeback.

**What is Britney Spears' most scandalous moment ever?**

**41%**

Takes an electric razor and shaves her head in a Tarzana, Calif., hair salon in February 2007

**31%**

Flashes her bare crotch while partying with Paris Hilton in Los Angeles in 2006

**15%**

Photographed driving with her infant son Sean Preston on her lap in 2006

**8%**

Almost drops baby while walking in New York City in 2006

**5%**

Smashes a paparazzo's car with an umbrella in February 2007

## 6 WOODY ALLEN MARRIES SOON-YI!

Woody Allen films often feature unorthodox love stories, but he created the strangest one of all in his real life in 1992 when—during a bitter battle with longtime partner Mia Farrow over custody of their three children—the 56-year-old confirmed that he was in love with 21-year-old Soon-Yi Previn, Farrow's adopted daughter. (Farrow uncovered the relationship when she found nude photos Allen had taken of Previn in their apartment.) In 1997 Allen and Previn married; they now have two kids.

**CAREER IMPACT: MINOR**

The director continues to release a movie each year—and has earned six more Oscar nominations. The thunderous ovation he received for his surprise 2002 Oscar appearance, meanwhile, was a fairly clear all-is-forgiven moment.



## 7 DIXIE CHICKS DIS BUSH—COUNTRY GOES CRAZY!

It's almost quaint, remembering when opposition to the Bush administration could be a radical statement. But when Natalie Maines of the Dixie Chicks told a London audience on March 10, 2003, that the trio was "ashamed" to share a home state with the U.S. president, it was the gibe heard round the world. **CAREER IMPACT: MINOR** While they initially took a drubbing—their chart-topping single "Travelin' Soldier" vanished, and mocking the group became No. 1 with a bullet on conservative talk radio—things began looking up with the Chicks' 2006 release *Taking the Long Way*. It debuted at No. 1 with sales of 526,000, and bounced back into the top 10 after earning five Grammys in February.





## MICHAEL JACKSON DANGLES BABY!

**What is Michael Jackson's most scandalous moment ever?**

**39%**

*Dangles his infant son over a hotel balcony*

**32%**

*Accused of child sexual abuse in September 1993 (settles out of court the following year)*

**25%**

*A teenage accuser testifying in court in 2005 claims the King of Pop plied him with "Jesus juice" (wine in a soda can); a jury acquits him of all charges*

**3%**

*Weds Lisa Marie Presley in 1994*

**1%**

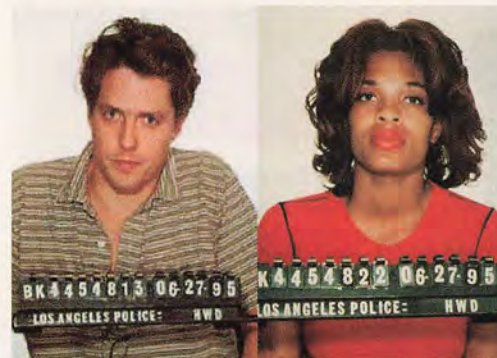
*Cancels the rest of his 1993 *Dangerous* tour after admitting to an addiction to painkillers*

Michael Jackson and children. It's a tricky subject—ever since the King of Pop was first accused of molestation in 1993 (he settled out of court with the accuser in 1994). But until Nov. 19, 2002, the public never really had a clear picture of how the King of Pop related to kids; then they saw what he did to one of his own. While visiting Berlin, Jacko greeted fans waiting below his fourth-floor balcony by dangling his son, Prince Michael II (a.k.a. "Blanket"), over the railing—as the baby wriggled and kicked under his one-arm grasp. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** The video of Jackson's shocking gaffe played endlessly around the world, offering another turn in the singer's downward spiral of molestation accusations (he faced more in 2005 but was acquitted) and plastic surgery as performance art.



## SINÉAD RIPS INTO POPE!

Lorne Michaels and millions of Catholics were so not pleased when Sinéad O'Connor capped her 1992 *SNL* appearance by rending a photo of the Pope. Ripping up that picture on live TV was her dramatic way of making a statement about child abuse, she later explained, but by then outraged viewers were more interested in the singer's head on a platter. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** Radio stations banned her songs, fans destroyed her albums, she was fiercely booed at a Bob Dylan tribute two weeks later, and she never regained her platinum-selling status. In 2004 she took out a full-page ad in the *Irish Examiner* pleading with her country-folk to stop making fun of her.



## 4 HUGH GRANT'S DIVINE DRIVE-BY!

Usually an actor's publicity tour for a new movie involves a round of talk-show appearances and magazine interviews. But just two weeks before the release of his 1995 comedy *Nine Months*, Hugh Grant put a new spin on PR when he was arrested in L.A. after police discovered him engaging in "lewd conduct" with prostitute Divine Brown. He was fined \$1,180 and placed on two years of probation. **CAREER IMPACT: POSITIVE** Thanks in part to his perfect apology on *The Tonight Show* ("I did a bad thing"), *Nine Months* ended up outgrossing his breakout hit *Four Weddings and a Funeral* with \$69.7 million. The debacle actually seemed to enhance his charmingly rakish persona, which he put to good use later in *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *About a Boy*.





## 2 MEL(T) DOWN!

On the morning of July 28, 2006, Mel Gibson uttered 13 drunken words to L.A. County sheriff's deputy James Mee that would alter his career forever. "F---ing Jews.... The Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world," said the actor-director, who also reportedly called a female officer "sugar tits." (Gibson was arrested for DUI and pleaded no contest, receiving three years' probation and one year of mandated AA meetings.) He issued a statement July 29 apologizing for his "despicable" behavior and admitting to a battle with alcohol. **CAREER IMPACT: TBD** Endeavor agent Ari Emanuel called for Hollywood to stop working with Gibson, and ABC canned a Holocaust-themed TV show he was producing. True, Gibson's next film, *Apocalypto*, made a solid \$51 million, but studios aren't exactly rushing to cast him in, say, a sequel to *What Women Want*.



The Super Bowl is as American as apple pie. Flashing a bare breast on live TV during the Super Bowl, however, is not. That was quickly proven during the big game's Feb. 1, 2004, halftime show when Justin Timberlake tore off part of duet partner Janet Jackson's leather bodice, revealing a nipple-shield-adorned boob. With nearly 90 million people watching, many of them children, the incident became a flash point for family-values groups who had long argued that Hollywood was polluting kids' minds—and now they had proof. Timberlake apologized for the "wardrobe malfunction," as did Jackson, who claimed the tearaway bra was "an accident." But that did little to stop the ensuing tempest in a C-cup, which continued to make headlines throughout the year. The FCC issued CBS a \$550,000 fine, politicians threatened bills that would ratchet up the punishment for future offensive broadcasts, and frightened radio stations began deleting naughty titles—e.g., Elton John's "The Bitch Is Back"—from their playlists. **CAREER IMPACT: MAJOR** CBS would only allow Jackson and Timberlake to attend the Grammys if they apologized on the broadcast (she declined; he agreed). Jackson was also forced to withdraw as the lead of a planned ABC biopic on Lena Horne, and the Super Bowl controversy didn't help her 8th studio CD, *Damita Jo* (released weeks later), which sold just under a million. For reasons oft debated (racism? sexism? sheer popularity?), Timberlake emerged from the bra-haha unscathed.

# EW.com

WANT MORE HOLLYWOOD DRAMA? YOU'RE IN LUCK: READ ABOUT CELEBRITY SCANDALS 26–50 (AND TELL US WHICH ONES WE MISSED) AT EW.COM

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# HOLLYWOOD STAR MAP

SCANDAL  
EDITION

ON YOUR NEXT L.A. VACATION, DON'T BOTHER WITH THOSE BORING HANDPRINTS IN CEMENT—TAKE THE HOLLYWOOD WALK OF SHAME TO THESE TABLOID LANDMARKS INSTEAD.  
BY SHIRLEY HALPERIN

## 1 Moonshadows

Mel Gibson partied at this Malibu restaurant and bar, just down the road from rehab to the stars Promises, on July 27, 2006, before being pulled over and launching into his notorious anti-Semitic rant (see page 31).

## 2 Esther's Haircutting Studio

Britney Spears' infamous breakdown buzz cut took place at this nondescript Valley hair salon (see page 29).

## 3 Vitello's Italian Restaurant

On May 4, 2001, the night Robert Blake's wife, Bonny Lee Bakley, was murdered, she dined with the *Baretta* star at this Studio City Italian joint. Blake was arrested and charged with Bakley's killing—but was acquitted in 2005.

## 4 Route 134 at Buena Vista Street

Nicole Richie was pulled over on this L.A. freeway after being spotted driving the wrong way. The *Simple Life* star was booked for DUI, and on July 27, she pleaded guilty and was sentenced to four days in jail, three years' probation, and a \$2,048 fine.

## 5 Will Rogers Memorial Park

In 1998, singer George Michael was arrested for "engaging in a lewd act" in this park's public potty and pleaded no contest. His sentence: an \$810 fine and 80 hours of community service.

## 6 Hyde Lounge

The celebrity haunt was the site of Paris Hilton's infamous catfight with former *Dancing With the Stars* contestant Shanna Moakler. The root of their conflict: Moakler's estranged husband, Travis Barker, who'd been seen around town with Hilton.

## 7 Tower Grove Drive and Benedict Canyon

"Hollywood Madam" Heidi Fleiss resided in this Beverly Hills neighborhood. She was exposed in 1993 for operating a call-girl ring that catered to L.A.'s very rich and famous (including Charlie Sheen). Fleiss was found guilty of tax evasion, money laundering, and attempted pandering, and served three years in jail.

## 8 The Viper Room

Actor River Phoenix collapsed in front of this Sunset Strip rock club on Halloween morning in 1993. The rising star, then 23, died from an overdose of heroin and cocaine.

## 9 Corner of Santa Monica Boulevard and Formosa Avenue

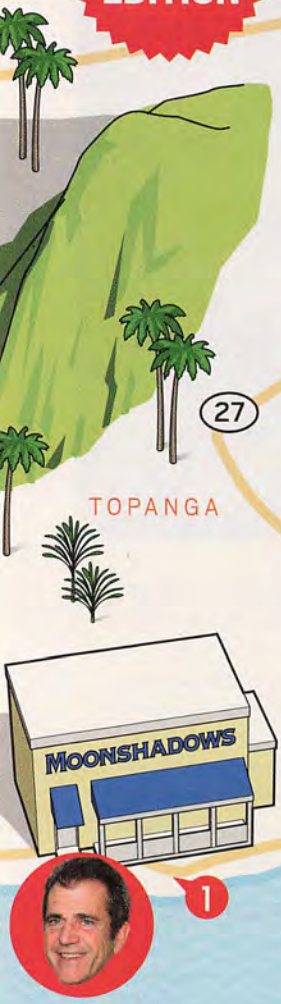
At this West Hollywood intersection, Eddie Murphy gave a lift to a transsexual prostitute and was stopped by police working the "prostitution abatement zone." No illegal activity transpired, and Murphy later said he offered the ride to be a "good Samaritan."

## 10 Saks Fifth Avenue

Winona Ryder lifted \$5,500 worth of merchandise from this Beverly Hills department store in 2001. She was convicted of grand theft and vandalism and sentenced to three years' probation, 480 hours of community service, \$3,700 in fines, and \$6,355 in restitution.

## 11 Parking lot of Santa Monica Civic Auditorium

The final stop of Lindsay Lohan's July 24 late-night car chase, which resulted in her second DUI arrest in a year (see page 25). Lohan has claimed her innocence.









*With the record-breaking premiere of 'High School Musical 2' and the success of 'Hairspray,' the teen idol with the emo haircut (and killer abs) is looking like the king of the world. But will Disney's star student become the next Leo—or Baio?*

*Hollywood execs suggest his next move.*

By Ari Karpel

# The Rise (or Fall) of Zac





**On a recent Friday night**, as living rooms across America reverberated with the shrieks of roughly 17.2 million viewers, Disney Channel's *High School Musical 2* became the single most watched basic-cable show ever.

And Zac Efron became the single most wanted teenage heartthrob—for now.

It's a precarious moment for the Arroyo Grande, Calif., native. Having ridden last year's phenomenally successful *HSM* to a major role in this summer's hit musical *Hairspray*, the 19-year-old went back to school for a triumphant reprise of his *HSM* role. Now his belly button's on the cover of *Rolling Stone*, and his next moves will be closely watched. You can't help but wonder: Will he be the next Leonardo DiCaprio or the next Scott Baio?

Making the leap from teen idol to leading man is one of the toughest tricks in Hollywood.

The industry is so desperate for bankable male headliners that it'll throw millions at Efron to do commercial projects that appeal to his teen fan base. But teen fan bases can become a liability pretty fast. Efron will have to resist a lot of money and flattery if he wants to be taken seriously. That's difficult at any age; for a 19-year-old, it's darn near impossible. Efron will also have to contend with the knowledge that Hollywood is a very fickle, uh, basketball coach. "Hollywood is building up Zac Efron to fail," says a top-tier publicist. "He's America's sweetheart and I love that kid. But the first time he steps out of place, they're going to kill him."

At the moment, Efron has the kind of heat that every actor under 25 would give his six-pack for. Lately his name's been attached to a trio of films, but he's yet to finalize any deals. There's the musical remake of *Footloose*, of

# Efron







## The Next Course Load

With *HSM 3* in the planning stages, here's what's in store for the rest of the gang. —LS

- 1. Ashley Tisdale, 22** (Elle Woods wannabe Sharpay), is a voice on Disney Channel's new animated series *Phineas and Ferb*; can be seen as Maddie on the network's *The Suite Life of Zack & Cody*; and is filming a DVD feature for MGM called *Picture This*.
- 2. Corbin Bleu, 18** (class jock Chad), wraps his Discovery Kids series *Flight 29 Down* with an Aug. 25 TV movie and will record a follow-up to his debut CD, *Another Side*.
- 3. Lucas Grabeel, 22** (Sharpay's stylish twin brother), has made two indies: *Alice Upside Down*, a family drama with Penny Marshall; and *The Adventures of Food Boy*, a comedy about a kid with the ability to make food appear out of thin air.
- 4. Vanessa Hudgens, 18** (sweetheart bookworm Gabriella), is working on the follow-up to her 2006 solo CD, *V*.
- 5. Monique Coleman, 26** (sassy Taylor), is penning a motivational book for aspiring actors.

which he says: "It's just an idea right now, there's no script." There's *Seventeen*, about a 36-year-old guy who wants to be young again, and wakes up one day as a hunky high schooler; Efron is very likely to sign on, but there's still no director, so there's no final deal. And then there's *HSM 3*, which is planned as a theatrical release. Efron has been in talks to extend the franchise—but hasn't signed that contract yet, either. America's sweetheart, it seems, has already passed the first test: He's keeping his options open. He's also wisely refrained from releasing a solo album and made *Hairspray* instead of participating in last year's *HSM* concert tour, though Disney must have been miffed.

Efron could certainly follow in the nimble footsteps of his *Hairspray* costar John Travolta, whom he's idolized ever since he saw *Grease*. "I remember thinking musicals were cool all because of John," Efron says. (The affection is mutual, by the way. "He's very talented," Travolta has said. "He reminds me of me in *Grease*.") *Hairspray* producer Craig

Zadan thinks Efron has something approaching an obligation to the musical genre. "Three decades have gone by since John did *Grease*, and no one has succeeded him," he says. "Zac should not turn his back on the musical. He should embrace it, as long as he peppers in other kinds of movies." Actress Lori Loughlin—who costarred with Efron on a series she co-created for The WB, 2004's *Summerland*—just wants to make sure the actor gets to demonstrate his range. "He's a really good dramatic actor, too, and I hope he can get back to that," she says. "He's really hot now, but he's still going to have to fight for the roles that the industry isn't necessarily going to want to give him."

Efron is certainly winning within the sunny confines of *HSM*, but it requires a tremendous leap of faith to believe that his acting will ever be in DiCaprio's league. (His best dramatic outing was playing an autistic teen in 2004's *Miracle Run*. But unless you're an avid Lifetime viewer, you probably missed it.) Efron *will* have to fight for dramatic roles—and he'll have to find a way to add more males to his following, without alienating the girls. At a pivotal point in his career, DiCaprio himself passed on a major payday for Disney's *Hocus Pocus* and instead fought for a role in a small film called *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*. It landed him his first Oscar nomination. Efron needs to find his crossover project. "I don't think he has to do *Boys Don't Cry*, though," says a well-known movie producer. "I don't think he has to play a transvestite."

So Efron's homework assignment looks something like this: Be commercial but credible, boyish but masculine; deliver audiences *and* good reviews; and do it all under the glare of a thousand spotlights. Well, in the original *HSM*, Troy Bolton managed to stay true to both his basketball team and his dream of singing. Efron just needs to get out there and play like hell. ■ (Additional reporting by Carrie Bell, Vanessa Juarez, Sean Smith, Lindsay Soll, Nicole Sperling, and Christine Spines)

## Most Likely to Succeed?

While a lucky few graduated with honors, other high school heartthrobs were doomed to be held back. BY ADAM MARKOVITZ



**BRAD  
PITT**

Playing down his pretty-boy looks took him from *Head of the Class* to head of the A list.



**CHRISTIAN  
SLATER**

He was too cool for school in *Heathers*, but bad behavior made him a Hollywood dropout.



**LEONARDO  
DICAPRIO**

No *Growing Pains* here: Since the sitcom, he's found *Titanic* fame—and a trio of Oscar nods.



**FREDDIE  
PRINZE JR.**

When the *She's All That* star traded the big screen for a failed sitcom, this Prinze lost his charm.



**JOHNNY  
DEPP**

Who knew the dreamboat from *21 Jump Street* would steer *Pirates* to box office treasure?



**LUKE  
PERRY**

He left *90210* for a film career that lasted all of 8 *Seconds* (the name of his 1994 flop).



# Which high school did you go to?

One's wholesome, the other horny. But once upon a weekend, 'HSM 2' and 'Superbad' both reigned supreme. Here's how these odes to adolescence stack up. BY LINDSAY SOLL



## East High School

'High School Musical 2'

## Clark Secondary School

'Superbad'

### MAJOR PLAYERS

Drama queen Sharpay, brainiac Gabriella, and all-star Troy

Crass Seth, sensitive Evan, and dorky Fogell

### THE DILEMMA

How to stay true to your pals when success gets in the way

How to lose your virginity by getting girls drunk at a house party

### KINDA LIKE

'Grease' meets 'From Justin to Kelly'

'Revenge of the Nerds' meets 'American Pie'

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Having picnics, playing baseball, and gearing up for the summertime talent show

Shotgunning beers, surfing porn, and getting fake IDs past the cops

### MUSICAL CLIMAX

Troy delivers a show-stopping solo, "Bet On It"...on a golf course

Evan delivers the Guess Who ballad "These Eyes"...to a bunch of cokeheads

### HOW FAR DO THEY GO?

Troy and Gabriella share three (closed-mouthed) kisses.

Evan and Becca get wasted and almost have sex—but she pukes.

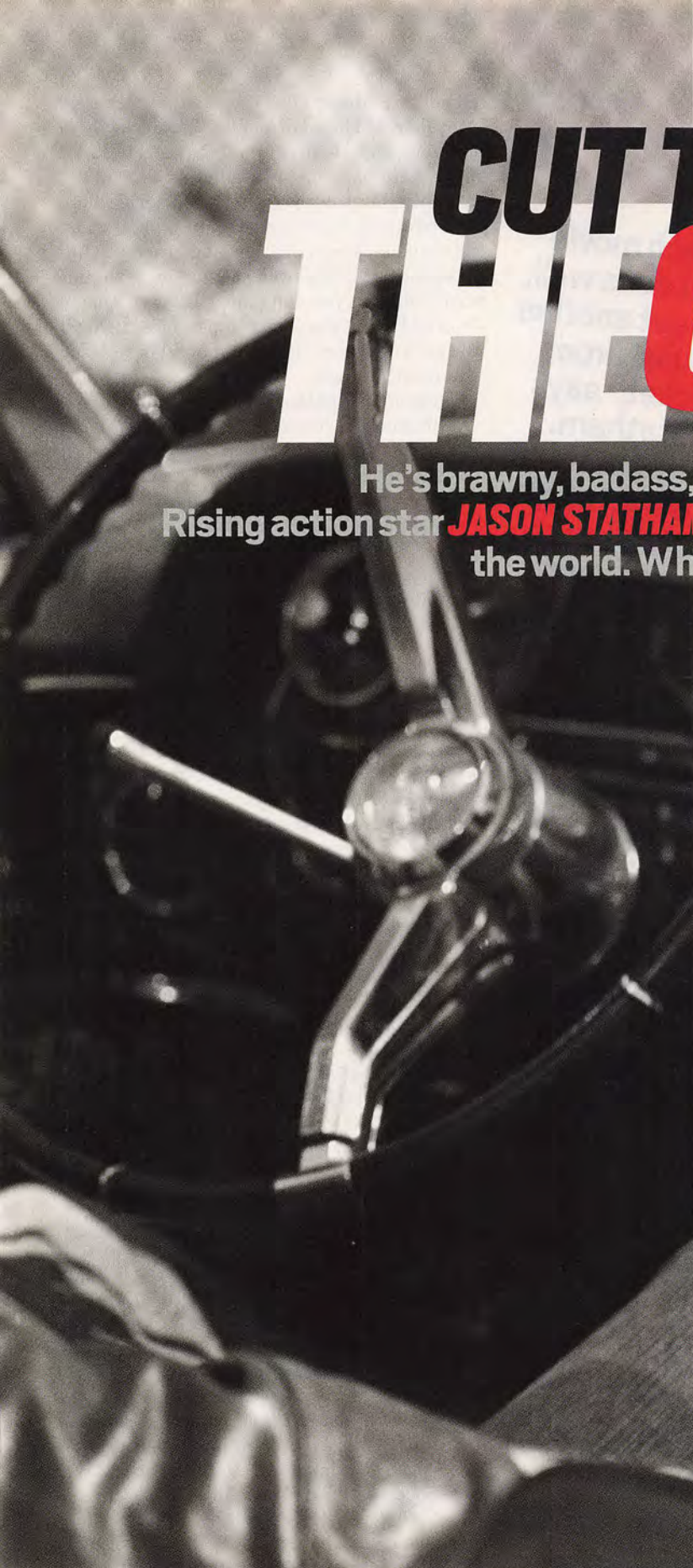


EAST HIGH FACADE: TISDALE/HUGGINS/EFRON TRIO, GOLF COURSE: ADAM LARKEY; GREASE: PARAMOUNT/THE KOBA COLLECTION; FROM JUSTIN TO KELLY: JON FARMER; SUPERBAD: MELISSA MOSELEY (6); REVENGE OF THE NERDS: 20TH CENTURY FOX/EVERETT COLLECTION; AMERICAN PIE: VIVIAN ZINK









# CUT TO THE CHASE

He's brawny, badass, and even does his own stunts. Rising action star **JASON STATHAM** wants to save the world. Why won't anyone let him?

**BY CHRIS NASHAWATY**

Photograph by James Dimmock

**IF YOU'RE A FAN** of a certain kind of action movie, these are dark times. In 1987, for example, you could go to the multiplex and see Mel Gibson in *Lethal Weapon*, Sylvester Stallone in *Over the Top*, and Arnold Schwarzenegger flexing his Bavarian biceps in *Predator* and *The Running Man*. If your tastes ran a bit more down-market, you could also check out Charles Bronson—creaky, but still hell with a Beretta—in *Death Wish 4: The Crackdown*, or Patrick Swayze as the postapocalyptic Nomad in *Steel Dawn*. And if you had already worked your way through all of those, well, 1988's *Die Hard* was just around the corner.

Two decades later, there's Matt Damon as Jason Bourne and...who else exactly? Russell Crowe seems conflicted about being an action star—he'd just as soon play a mathematician or a yuppie examining his soul in a French vineyard as make another *Gladiator*. Keanu Reeves would apparently rather go off and make puppy-dog eyes at Sandra Bullock than help her stop another runaway bus. Colin Farrell seems to have dropped off the map altogether. Christian Bale and Heath Ledger are more interested in Gotham City than the real world. And yes, Daniel Craig managed to breathe new life into the Bond franchise, but those come around only every couple of years. In the meantime, action junkies have had to make do with comic-book superheroes who all seem to come with tortured, hand-wringing backstories. Compared with guys like Tango and Cash, they're little more than boys in tights.

No one, it seems, is dying to be a red-meat action hero these days.

Well, almost no one.

If the name Jason Statham doesn't ring any bells,





**Each movie that does well, you get another bulletproof jacket," says Statham. "Without them, you get shot in the heart, and your career dies."**



Lock, Stock



Snatch



The Transporter



The Italian Job



Crank

then you've probably never seen Guy Ritchie's first two movies, *Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Snatch*. That, or you're not one of the 15-year-old boys who've turned Statham's *Transporter* movies into a \$197 million worldwide franchise. To them, Statham is a throwback to the dangerous leading men that defined the '80s golden age of tough talk and testosterone. To them, Statham is already a star.

If you take the time to sit down and watch a Jason Statham movie—any Jason Statham movie, really—you'll see something beyond all of the car chases and knuckle-scraping brawls. You'll see just how badly he wants to be a star. It's right there in his eyes. If you look at a movie like *Crank*, a caffeinated thriller from last year, in which Statham plays a hitman who's injected with a toxin that will kill him if he lets his heart rate dip below a hummingbird's tempo, you'll see the same hungry look that Stallone had in *Rocky*, or Schwarzenegger had in *Pumping Iron*.

But so far, Statham's career in America has been a series of middling hits and false starts. Each movie looks like it might be the one to vault him to the action-movie A list, but then it doesn't pan out. He's close. Statham knows that. So he keeps plugging away, kicking ass after ass, hoping the next one will be the one that gets him to where he wants to be.

This time, that next movie is *War*, in which he stars as a brooding FBI agent obsessed with hunting an assassin, played by Jet Li. And regardless of whether it winds up being the movie that makes the 39-year-old actor a household name, he knows that sooner or later the time will come when his career will have to go in one of two directions: He'll finally be anointed the next Bruce Willis...or fade away like the latest Jean-Claude Van Damme.

**LIKE MOST MOVIE STARS**, Statham seems smaller in person than he does on screen. Unlike most, however, he's more handsome. Maybe that's because in his films he's usually taking a beating or covered in someone else's blood after dishing one out. Like his idol, Bruce Willis, Statham wears his head shaved. It's covered in stubble, as is the rest of his granite face. He has 7 percent body fat and, if it weren't for the disarming smile, he'd give off the air of a British street tough who might smash your face into the curb just for kicks.

When he walks into the Polo Lounge in Beverly Hills for lunch, the crowd of aging industry types swivel their heads toward him. Who is this guy? Then they swivel them back. He's no one. "F--- in 'ell, this place is as old Hollywood as it gets," says Statham in his rough Cockney growl. Needless to say, these are not Statham's people.

Statham, who's never been married and splits his time between England and L.A., grew up in a blue-collar neighborhood in South London, where his father worked as a salesman. Actually, salesman is

too polite. Statham's dad ran a mock auction, or "ram shop." "They call 'em that because you're ramming people with s--- and you're taking their money," Statham says. His father would rent out an empty storefront and set up a lectern, where he'd stand with a gavel and auction off liquidated merchandise. Young Jason would lure folks into the auction by giving away free stereos. "The stuff wasn't hot, but you don't know where it's come from and why it's so cheap. It may have fallen off the back of a lorry," he jokes, uncorking a raspy ex-smoker's laugh.

Statham learned the trade from his old man and eventually branched out on his own, working the streets outside of tourist traps like Harrods with a velvet-lined briefcase full of costume jewelry he'd buy for one pound and sell for 10. "Occasionally, I would feel bad if it was an old lady," he says. "But anyone else, you're an idiot."

Around the same time, Statham began diving competitively. He eventually worked his way up to the British national team. At one point, he was ranked as high as 12th in the world. He also started training in martial arts and boxing. One day during diving practice, a modeling agent came to the pool, liked his look, and asked him to model in a print ad for French Connection jeans. "It's not like I was on the catwalk," he says defensively. "I'm too short and my f---ing nose is halfway across my face. All I had to do was sit in a deck chair."

As luck would have it, French Connection turned out to be a financier of 1998's *Lock, Stock*, which got Statham an audition with its director, Guy Ritchie. "During the meeting, I started telling him what I used to do, working on the street, and that's when he became interested." Ritchie's film is set in London's East End, with its underbelly milieu of gangsters, gamblers, and grifters. Statham's shady background was a perfect fit.

In the opening scene of the movie, Statham stands on a street corner, selling stolen jewelry, spouting come-ons in his thick Cockney accent: "'Too late, too late,' will be the cry when the man with the bargains has passed you by!" It's one of those star-is-born moments, in part because Statham wasn't acting at all. When the film wrapped, he sat around for 18 months, waiting for another offer. But aside from a week's work on a cheapie starring rapper Ja Rule, he didn't get one until Ritchie cast him in *Snatch* two years later.

A couple of thankless parts in forgettable films like John Carpenter's *Ghosts of Mars* followed. And Statham's next break came when Luc Besson (*The Fifth Element*), struck by the actor's face and his physicality, wrote a movie for him to star in: *The Transporter*. In that 2002 film, Statham plays an ex-Special Forces officer in the south of France who takes no-questions-asked delivery assignments for drug dealers and Euro hoods. Made for just \$15 million, the film made more than \$25 million at



the box office and another \$44 million internationally. But it was on DVD that the movie exploded, pulling in an additional \$60 million in the U.S. alone.

Which helps explain 2005's *Transporter 2*, a kinder, gentler riff on the same fast-cars-and-fisticuffs story. The sequel made \$128 million worldwide and also marked the first time Statham was paid a million dollars to be in a movie. "That was like getting a bulletproof jacket," he says of the film's success. "Each movie that does well, you get another bulletproof jacket. Without them, you get shot right in the heart and your career dies. I don't think I'm quite bulletproof yet." Statham even talks like an action movie.

Since the first *Transporter*, Statham has taken smaller roles in big films (2003's *The Italian Job*) and bigger roles in small films (the drug-fueled drama *London*). But he's the first to admit that not all of his movies (2002's *Mean Machine*, 2005's *Chaos*) have been top-notch. "Sometimes on these movies we get by on the skin of our teeth," he says. "Average stunts, substandard sets, stuntmen that can't react, but we get through."

Still, if you look at the escalating box office returns of his films, it's clear that there's something about him that people are beginning to respond to. The actor believes part of the reason is his willingness to do his own stunts—which is also a gift when movies are made on the cheap. "I want to do action movies where people in the audience are like 'F---ing 'ell, that's him actually doing that s---!' I'm not saying I've done every single stunt in every one of my movies, but all you have to do is get the pause button and see that it's me jumping on a Jet Ski onto the back of that bus."

*War* director Philip G. Atwell, for one, was both pleasantly surprised by and a bit nervous about Statham's insistence on putting his life at risk. "He did this jump from one roof to another. It was six or seven stories up and it was a good 10 feet between the two roofs. That may not sound like much, but trust me, when you're that high up, it's high! I don't think Bruce Willis would do that."

**PERHAPS THE BIGGEST** surprise of Statham's slow-burn ascent is just how eclectic his fan base has become. It's not just teenage boys anymore. "We've done a lot of research and test screenings on Jason's movies," says Tim Palen, co-president of film marketing for Lionsgate, the indie studio behind four of Statham's films. "He appeals equally strong to women. They swoon over him. It feels like yesterday's brute is today's leading man, with Daniel Craig and Clive Owen and now Jason."

If *War* doesn't turn out to be the movie that turns Statham into the Cockney Bruce Willis, he'll have other chances, starting with the upcoming *The Bank Job*, a heist film with Saffron Burrows; and next fall's *Death Race*, a \$60 million reinterpretation of the 1975 postapocalyptic road-rage flick. "The movie's



**"I'm not saying I've done every single stunt in every one of my movies," Statham says, "but all you have to do is get the pause button and see that it's me jumping on a Jet Ski onto the back of that bus."**



perfectly tailored to take him to the next level," says *Death Race* director Paul W.S. Anderson. "I wrote it for someone who was McQueen cool and Bronson hard—and that's Jason." After that, Statham may make a *Transporter 3* or, possibly, a G.I. Joe movie with Mark Wahlberg.

If and when Statham's crossover moment comes, he'll be ready. "The movies I've made so far are stepping stones. I think I've only done 50 percent of what I'm really capable of."

So does that ever get frustrating, knowing he can do more? "F---, yeah! It's the most frustrating thing in the world! Because you know it's just around the corner. But once you get around that corner, it's around the *next* corner. I take a lot of meetings and get a lot of pats on the back. 'You're great! We really want to work with you!' And that's great, I'm sure they do. But you're just waiting for one of them to bet on your horse."

Statham lowers his voice. "Look, I don't want to sound like the guy who's mad he's not a movie star. I'm very f---ing grateful."

He leans back and rubs his stubbled head.

"Have you ever seen *Pumping Iron* with Arnold Schwarzenegger? In that movie he says, 'The wolf climbing the hill is always hungrier than the wolf at the top of the hill....'"

As he says this, a grin spreads across Statham's face, with a meaning that couldn't be clearer: It's the grin of the hungriest wolf in town. ■



# Sweet? Salty? Crunchy?

It's not that we  
can't make up our minds.

It's that we  
shouldn't have to.





# THE MUST LIST

Ten Things We Love This Week



## 1. SOUTH PARK: SEASON 10

After a decade, Cartman & Co. still got bite. The latest episodes to hit DVD spoof James Frey and Oprah, *The Dog Whisperer*, as well as *Family Guy*. Chef gets butchered too. Literally.

## 2. THE KING OF KONG

A pair of prodigious *Donkey Kong* gamers face off in this enthralling big-screen documentary steeped in (who knew?) scandal, intrigue, and passion.

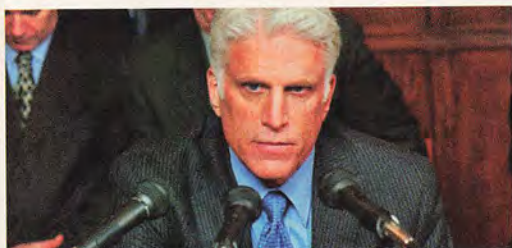
## 3. HARTSBURG, USA, by David Mizner

That age-old clash between liberals and conservatives manifests itself in Mizner's uplifting novel, about two small-townners competing for a school-board position.



## 4. MISSION: MAN BAND

You'll genuinely root for these four former teen-music idols—led by Chris Kirkpatrick of 'N Sync—who earnestly join forces to revitalize their careers.

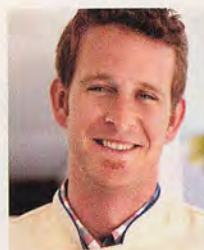


## 5. TED DANSON on 'Damages'

The actor steals the show—FX's legal drama, that is—as a charismatic, unscrupulous CEO stoking the ire of Glenn Close's cutthroat attorney.

## 6. UMBRELLA, Mandy Moore

Head over to [music.yahoo.com](http://music.yahoo.com) to check out Moore's graceful, balladic cover of Rihanna's omnipresent summer single.



## 7. CJ and DALE on 'Top Chef'

Why can't nice guys finish first? Tall dude CJ (left) and mohawked dude Dale continue to make Bravo's often nasty competition more palatable.

## 8. VERSATILE HEART, Linda Thompson

Folk fan or not, there's no denying the understated beauty of the Brit songstress' third solo outing, which features assists from Rufus Wainwright and others.

## 9. THE FUGITIVE: SEASON 1, VOL. 1

The thrilling 1960s TV series at last hits DVD—some 40 years after poor Dr. Richard Kimble finally caught that dastardly One-Armed Man.

## READER'S CHOICE SEND YOUR PICKS TO EW.COM



## 10. TAXI DRIVER: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

Relive Scorsese's dark masterpiece with this extras-packed two-disc set.  
*Submitted by Henning Fog*



# THE REVIEWS

'RIGHT AT YOUR DOOR' + 'HEROES: SEASON 1' + 'WEEDS' + MUSIC-VIDEO ROUNDUP + 'THE BRIEF WONDROUS LIFE OF OSCAR WAO'

Johansson bellies  
up to the fountain  
with a youth



## MOVIES

### Hire Education

A first-time nanny learns more  
than she cares to about the  
lifestyles of the rich and heinous.

BY OWEN GLEIBERMAN

#### **The Nanny Diaries**

Scarlett

Johansson,

Laura Linney

PG-13, 105 mins.

(MGM/The

Weinstein Co.)

The rich are getting richer, but that isn't buying them much love from the movies; it may only be upping the hatred. In *The Nanny Diaries*, based on Emma McLaughlin and Nicola Kraus' I-was-a-yuppie-nurse-maid chick-lit novel, Annie Braddock, a suburban New Jersey girl just out of college, falls into what is, for her, an innovative mode of delayed adulthood: She decides to spend the summer working as a nanny in New York City. Annie has vague notions of becoming an anthropologist, but beyond that she has little idea of who she wants to be. Scarlett Johansson, with her guarded, people-pleaser softness and slightly morose carnality, plays her as a born observer, an unformed young woman who embraces her new job almost voyeuristically, as a window onto the adult world—or, at least, a



certain obscenely wealthy Manhattan sector of it.

Annie gets hired to look after Grayer (Nicholas Reese Art), the spoiled but basically sweet 5-year-old son of a couple she refers to simply as "the X's," who live just off Fifth Avenue in an apartment that is pure, sprawling, old-money-flavored real estate porn. Mrs. X (Laura Linney), a vainly prattling porcelain-doll narcissist, does nothing all day but shop, lunch, tend to her wall of designer shoes, and go to "meetings" with other social X-rays. They're mommies who don't want to be mommies—or, at least, don't want to spend more than five minutes at it, apart from fretting over which private school their tot genius is going to get into (or, in the case of culinarily correct Mrs. X, whether Grayer eats tofu or peanut butter). They treat their kids as designer accessories.

Actually, Mrs. X does one additional thing: She complains—a lot. Whatever Annie does, it's never good enough, and Mrs. X's way of addressing her simply as "Nanny!" is the ultimate demeaning sneer. She might be talking to a domestic robot. *The Nanny Diaries* has nothing but sympathy for poor, put-upon Annie as she cleans up kiddie vomit in her upper-class prison, but it's less interested in her as a character than it is in the elite social pathology of the people she's working for. This is the same strategy that worked so well in *The Devil Wears Prada*, which had the daring to portray Meryl Streep's editrix monster as a figure of artfully malign fascination. Laura Linney, a great actress, with an erotic danger Streep has never possessed, could surely have done something similar, but *The Nanny Diaries* turns her into a pale WASP zombie—the Stepford Bitch.

Mr. X (Paul Giamatti) is an even coarser piece of work. He's a blustery mergers hotshot, with piggy eyes that peer out from arty metal spectacles, a cell phone soldered to his ear, and a mistress he does such a bad job of hiding that it's as if he enjoys tormenting his wife. (His sadism is at least a break from his indifference.) Hooked on her husband's money, Mrs. X lives in denial, to the point that when she finds a strange negligee in the laundry, she orders the nanny to "admit" it's hers. Linney hints at the sadness beneath Mrs. X's waxworks existence, but it's never more than a hint.

*The Nanny Diaries* was written and directed by Shari Springer Bergman and Robert Pulcini, who previously made the marvelous, lower-depths comedy *American Splendor* (2003). You'd think that the filmmakers who caught the life of the squalid, lumpen crank Harvey Pekar with such transporting humanity would try to do something similar for the superrich. The movie comes on as a cheerful anthropological satire, opening with an amusing series of faux dioramas in the Museum of Natural History (they include New York types like "Tribeca Fashionista" and "Park Slope Lawyer"). But Springer Bergman and Pulcini



Linney dresses for excess



## Backstory

+ Being a nanny for the rich and fabulous doesn't have to be horrible: Maria (Julie Andrews, above) had it okay in *The Sound of Music*, as did Mary Poppins and Mrs. Doubtfire. Our vote for the hardest-working nanny in show business goes to Snow White—who had her hands full with those seven knuckleheads.

embark on their anthro-expedition to the Upper East Side wielding poison daggers. Their sympathies are still with the working class—didactically so. Yes, there are wealthy New Yorkers as toxic as the X's, but by making them so one-dimensional that it threatens to strain the word *dimension*, *The Nanny Diaries* becomes as flaccid and predictable as something you'd expect from Hollywood hacks.

What the picture keeps dancing around is that Annie, in her way, is nearly as privileged a person as the X's. She becomes so attached to Grayer that she can't leave him, but the other nannies she gets to know, most of whom are nonwhite, could scarcely afford to think of their jobs as a social "experiment." The more that Annie stresses, speaking to us in her mopey voice-over, whining about the perils of home day care to the preppie dreamboat she dubs "Harvard Hottie" (Chris Evans), the more you want to say, "If you don't like it, girlfriend, then quit!" For a light comedy, *The Nanny Diaries* turns out to have an off-putting theme. It glorifies the romance of slumming. **C-**



## CRITICAL MASS

A sampling of critics from across the country grade 10 current releases.

|                      | TY BURR<br>Boston Globe | LISA KENNEDY<br>The New York Times | LIAM LAGY<br>Toronto Globe and Mail | MICK L.SALLE<br>San Francisco Chronicle | JACK MATTHEWS<br>NY Daily News | TODD MCCARTHY<br>Variety | CLAUDIA PUIG<br>USA Today | CARRIE RICKES<br>The Philadelphia Inquirer | RENE RODRIGUEZ<br>The Austin Chronicle | STEPHANIE ZACHAREK<br>Salon.com | ENTERTAINMENT<br>WEEKLY | EW READERS* | CRITICS' AVERAGE |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| BECOMING JANE        | B                       | B                                  | C                                   | B-                                      | -                              | B-                       | B+                        | B-                                         | -                                      | C-                              | B                       | B           | B-               |
| THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM | A-                      | A-                                 | A                                   | B                                       | B+                             | A-                       | A                         | B-                                         | A-                                     | A                               | A-                      | A-          | A-               |
| HAIRSPRAY            | A-                      | B+                                 | B-                                  | A                                       | A                              | -                        | B+                        | A-                                         | B                                      | C                               | A-                      | A-          | B+               |
| HARRY POTTER 5       | B                       | B                                  | B                                   | C                                       | A-                             | B-                       | B+                        | B+                                         | B                                      | C+                              | B+                      | B+          | B                |
| ▲ THE INVASION       | C                       | C-                                 | D                                   | B                                       | C-                             | -                        | -                         | -                                          | C-                                     | -                               | B-                      | B-          | C                |
| NO RESERVATIONS      | C+                      | B                                  | B-                                  | C-                                      | -                              | C+                       | B                         | B-                                         | C-                                     | D+                              | C+                      | B-          | C+               |
| RUSH HOUR 3          | -                       | -                                  | C                                   | -                                       | C                              | -                        | C                         | C+                                         | C                                      | C+                              | C+                      | C+          | C                |
| THE SIMPSONS MOVIE   | B-                      | B-                                 | B+                                  | -                                       | B                              | B-                       | B+                        | B                                          | B                                      | A-                              | B+                      | B+          | B                |
| STARDUST             | -                       | B+                                 | B+                                  | B                                       | B+                             | -                        | B                         | -                                          | B+                                     | B+                              | B                       | B+          | B+               |
| SUPERBAD             | B+                      | B+                                 | B+                                  | A                                       | B                              | B+                       | -                         | B                                          | B                                      | B+                              | B                       | B+          | B+               |

\*EW READER GRADES come from the Front Row, EW's online reader panel. If you'd like to join, go to [frontrowpanel.com/join](http://frontrowpanel.com/join).

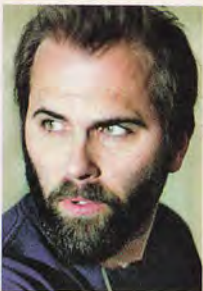


Director's  
Chair  
**CHRIS  
GORAK**

He made his living as an art director on paranoid fantasies like *Fight Club*. But thanks to his directorial debut, the dirty-bomb thriller *Right at Your Door* (which won a cinematography prize at last year's Sundance), Chris Gorak now faces the very real willies that come from cinematically destroying the city you live in. "If the atmosphere is right and there's a silence in L.A., you can definitely creep yourself out," the 38-year-old says after a 19-day shoot that left his cast drained and the lawn of a Hollywood Hills house coated in "ash."

Calling *Door* "a disaster film from the inside out," Gorak fuels his post-9/11 worst-case scenario with an unrelenting feeling of dread. "It might make people uncomfortable because they don't want to go there, but it's where we live.... So be not afraid of the film," Gorak laughs, before becoming appropriately paranoid, "but know your enemy."

—Whitney Pastorek



McCormack looks for a window into Cochrane's soul

# Exile on Main Street

In this taut, terrifying thriller, a panicked Everyman seals himself in his house as L.A. reels from a dirty-bomb attack. **BY LISA SCHWARZBAUM**

## Right at Your Door

Rory Cochrane,  
Mary McCormack

R, 95 mins. (Roadside Attractions)

There are no zombies to distract from the plausibility of *Right at Your Door*. And that's what makes this smart, coolly horrifying American indie thriller one of the scariest movies you're likely to see all year—a post-9/11 nightmare

about terrorism, panic, and paranoia with real, waking-life implications. The time is now, the setting is the nothing-special new home of a young married couple in the hills of Los Angeles, where Lexi (Mary McCormack), a corporate type, kisses her stay-at-home musician husband, Brad (Rory Cochrane), goodbye and joins the city's commuting thousands. She forgot to charge her cell phone? Ah, well, who hasn't from time to time?

Then, in probable places like Beverly Hills, downtown, LAX, dirty bombs go off—those insidious weapons of destruction we now know to fear, localized but lingering in toxicity as chemical death travels through the ashy air. Lexi is out there and incommunicado; Brad is at home, frantic and thwarted from searching for his wife by the cops barring civilians from the roads. Eventually he follows emergency-broadcast instructions to seal himself inside and avoid contact with anyone exposed to the dirty dust. But then Lexi does show up, coughing and vomiting. And choices have to be made. What would you do?

Chris Gorak, making a smashing writing and directing debut, has established his career as a

production designer (*Lords of Dogtown*) and art director (*Minority Report*, *Fight Club*), and his eye for the vulnerabilities (and dramatic uses) of everyday existence is exceptional. Because Brad and Lexi haven't yet hooked up their cable, the only news is aural, not visual, allowing viewer imagination to mix with toxic fears. There's bottled water in the kitchen but not much, because, really, who follows the media admonishments to be ready for anything? The camera focus is tight, close, the action mostly confined to the house. But in one nerve-racking sequence soon after the blasts, Brad's panicky attempt to drive toward his wife on local streets is shot from a car's-eye view—the lurches and reverses, the peripheral sight of other citizens scrambling for their own safety in a new world where duct tape is precious as gold.

A corrective for 24 and its blowhardism, *Right at Your Door* doesn't waste time fulminating about who organized such effective terrorism, or why. Instead, Gorak keeps his inquiries intimate, and as a result, painfully identifiable. In the immediate information vacuum (and before the cloud of death dust blows north), Brad has to decide whether to give refuge to a handyman (Tony Perez) locked out of the house next door. In the long hours and even days that follow, as martial law is declared, Lexi and Brad have to consider a future denied. The story becomes more sinister (and movielike) as disinformation does its own damage, but the truth contained within this powerful fiction is very much at our door. **A-**

**EW  
PICK**



# Fight Lite

A journalist unearths an old boxer in this punchy drama.

BY LISA SCHWARZBAUM

## Resurrecting the Champ

Josh Hartnett, Samuel L. Jackson  
PG-13  
111 mins. (Yari)

Erik Kernan (Josh Hartnett), an ambitious, mediocre sportswriter, is journalism's laziest and most self-pitying practitioner. Not that the makers of *Resurrecting the Champ* think we'll notice, especially with Samuel L.

Jackson throwing fancy punches as the homeless boxer Erik decides is his ticket to self-validation—and a good feature story—and Hartnett's unvarying earnestness. The writer discovers the wreck who calls himself the Champ in an alley—battered, drunk, and telling tales of former glory. So eager is he to prove himself to his estranged, more accomplished wife (Kathryn Morris), his moppety 6-year-old-son (Dakota Goyo), and the ghost of the famous sportscaster dad who wasn't around when he was a kid that Erik skips the small stuff. Like fact-checking.

Adding their own heavy-handed editorializing to the gist of a 1997 magazine piece by J.R. Moehringer on which the movie is based, screenwriters Michael Bortman and Allison Burnett and cudgel-swinging director Rod Lurie are not content, though, to make this a story of two imperfect men. Instead, speechy monologues on the responsibilities of journalism, the particular evil of infotainment (represented by Teri Hatcher as a she-devil from Showtime), and the gooey sanctity of the bond between fathers and sons all but nullify Jackson's zesty performance. **D+**



Hartnett and Jackson curb their enthusiasm

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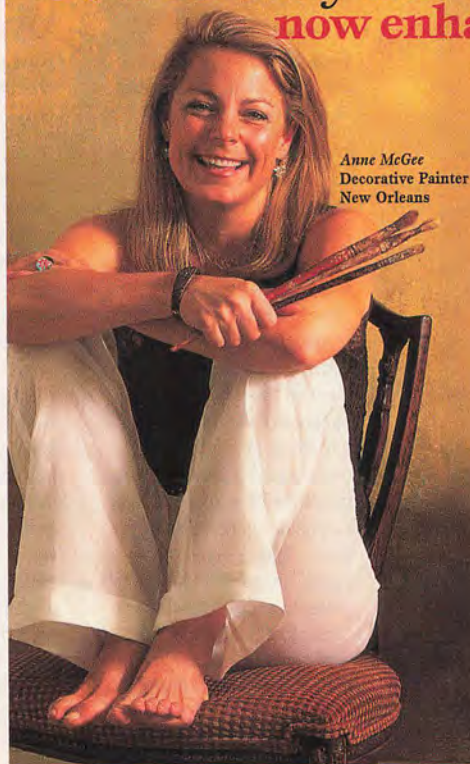
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## MOVIES



### The Last Legion

Colin Firth, Aishwarya Rai  
 PG-13, 101 mins.  
 (MGM/Weinstein Co.)

As a military commander protecting a 12-year-old descendant of Julius Caesar as the Roman Empire crumbles (long story short, the kid's sword becomes Excalibur), Colin Firth is noble, mostly. Heading up an almost touchingly jumbled Dino De Laurentiis historical Euro epic—retro orange color scheme and all—Firth graciously battles Goths out of a Capital One ad, flirts with a Byzantine fighter chick (Aishwarya Rai), and puts up with Ben Kingsley in Yoda mode. Every once in a while, though, Firth's eye-brow hints, Can you believe I'm wearing this dorky leather breastplate? **C**—LS



### Illegal Tender

Rick Gonzalez, Wanda De Jesus, Dania Ramirez  
 R, 108 mins. (Universal)

There's a moment, early on, when Wilson (Gonzalez), an entitled college whiz, follows his widowed mother (De Jesus) into the basement of their lush Connecticut manse, where she opens a safe and unloads a cache of guns. This is her secret: that they've been on the run for 20 years because of something his late father, a "noble" drug dealer, did. For a second, the movie has the snap of a truly surprising thriller—like a Hispanic *Kill Bill*—about an aging lioness willing to kill to protect her cub. But then we go back to following the kid, who manages to both mope and strut along the path to manhood. **C+**—MB

## The Good, the Bad, the Ugly KING ARTHUR FILMS



### THE GOOD

Monty Python and the Holy Grail

What it lacks in gravitas, it makes up for in sheer lunacy. And Graham Chapman makes a dashing Arthur. *Excalibur* John Boorman goes for the jugular with his bloody, lusty (Helen Mirren = hot) take on the legend.



### THE BAD

First Knight

Even Sean Connery as Arthur can't save a flick revolving around a petulant, heat-free affair between Richard Gere and Julia Ormond. *King Arthur* Speaking of heat-free, this "Dirty Dozen with swords" just sits there...even with Clive Owen.



### THE UGLY

A Kid in King Arthur's Court

Remember the least interesting dude from *American Pie*, Thomas Ian Nicholas? He's the kid. *Sword of the Valiant* More paycheck Connery, with Miles O'Keefe in tow. Do you really need to hear more? —Marc Bernardin



### Mr. Bean's Holiday

Rowan Atkinson, Max Baldry, Willem Dafoe  
 G, 87 mins. (Universal)

Rowan Atkinson, his face as pinched and gleaming as a Richard Nixon mask, is still doing his bit to keep classic screen comedy alive. Once again, Mr. Bean, the childlike British idiot—he's the walking id as Twit of the Year—tries to extricate himself from the mishaps he creates, which only results in more spectacular disaster. On a holiday to France, Bean eats oysters (a great joke), then gets stranded in the country, which for a while strands the film. But Atkinson's goofball grotesquerie never lets up—right through to the inspired finale, which could have been called *A Day at the Cannes Film Festival*. **B**—OG

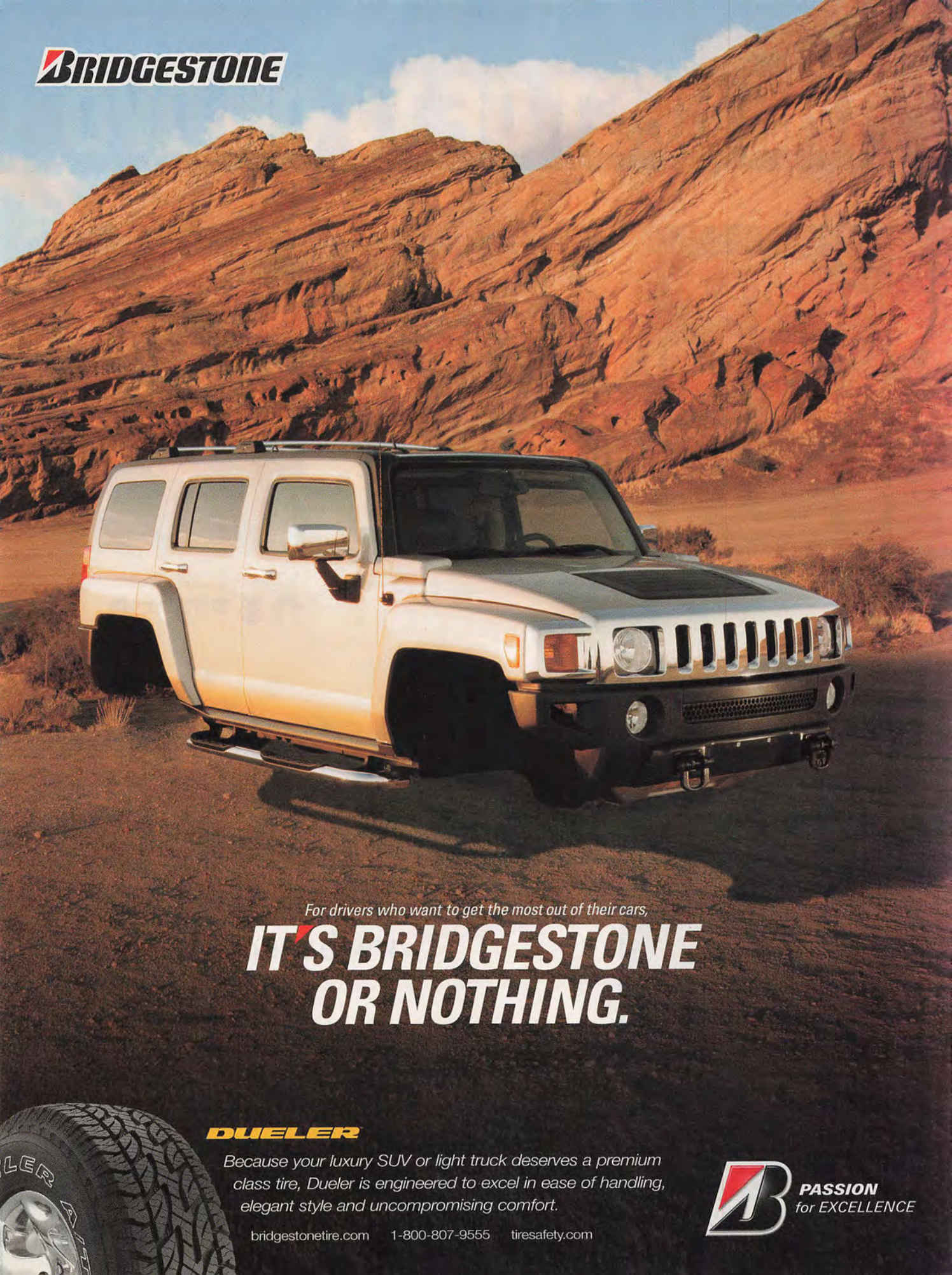


### Delirious

Steve Buscemi, Michael Pitt, Alison Lohman  
 Unrated, 106 mins.  
 (Peace Arch)

It would be nice to see a sharp, funny, penetrating satire of the new, kicked-up culture of empty media fame, but Tom DiCillo's scattershot buddy movie isn't it. Steve Buscemi, as an abrasive New York paparazzo, is way too overbearing scuzzy and "on edge." For no good reason, he makes a homeless pretty boy (Michael Pitt) his assistant, and the film turns into *Repo Man* crossed with *Midnight Cowboy*, propelled by a kind of generically scruffy indie-movie natter. Then Pitt gets famous, which allows DiCillo to make his big point: that paparazzi are forever on the outside looking in. **C+**—OG





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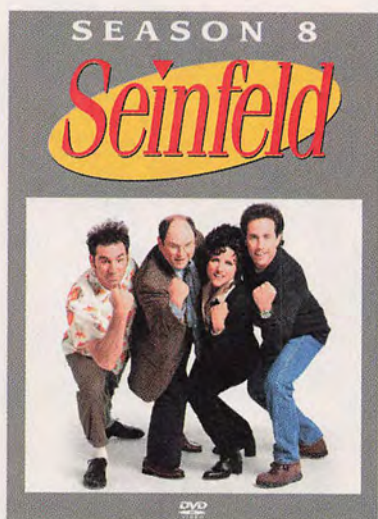
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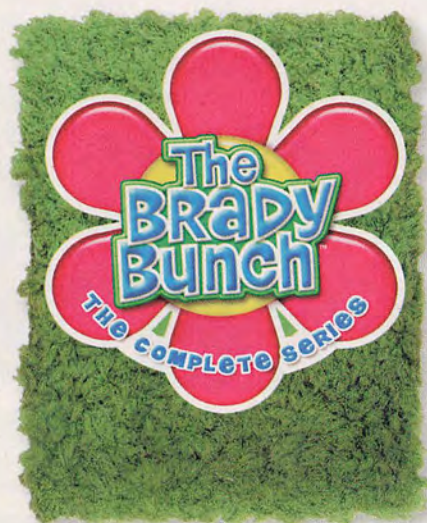


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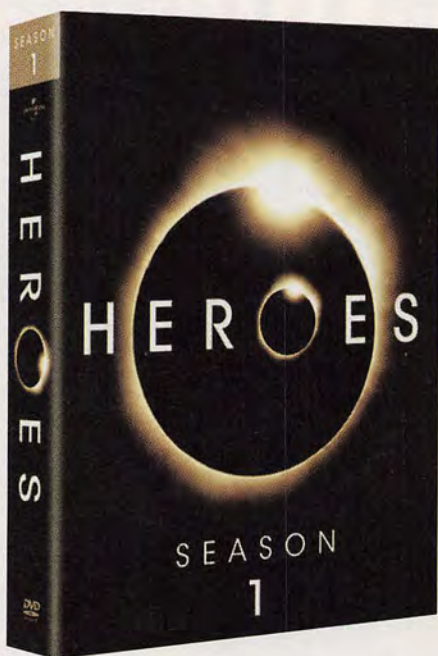
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AS PICKED BY THE EDITORS OF

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WEEKLY



# Now Playing

## The Bourne Ultimatum

PG-13, 111 mins.  
Nervy and dazzling, as Jason Bourne (Matt Damon) is hunted across continents. **A-** (#947, Aug. 10) —OG

## Death at a Funeral

R, 91 mins.  
You may feel the peculiar facial ache that comes from wishing to laugh with no satisfying release from this effortful farce about busted British propriety. **C+** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —LS

## Descent

NC-17, 103 mins.  
A demagogic feminist exploitation revenge drama. Rosario Dawson goes deep into fear and loathing as a college student who gets date-raped. **B** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —OG

## The 11th Hour

PG, 91 mins.  
Leonardo DiCaprio fronts an activist doc—alternately impassioned, despairing, edifying, and hectoring—about all the ways we are screwing up the earth in a death rattle of hubris. **B-** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —LS

## The Invasion

PG-13, 96 mins.  
The fourth body-snatchers film, and the first with no social-satirical consciousness. Nicole Kidman may not be the best choice to play the emotional savior of the human race. **B-** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —OG

## The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters

PG-13, 84 mins.  
A madly arresting doc in which two rival videogame geniuses vie to be the champion of *Donkey Kong*. It's a ruthless high drama of skill, ego, celebrity, and geek passion. **A** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —OG

## Rocket Science

R, 98 mins.  
Terminally annoying. It's too hip to ask you to feel sorry for Hal (Reece Daniel Thompson), a high school stutterer, yet it never explores his psychology. **C** (#948, Aug. 17) —OG

## Rush Hour 3

PG-13, 91 mins.  
Eager yet lazy buddy farce. **C+** (#948, Aug. 17) —OG

## The Simpsons Movie

PG-13, 88 mins.  
A classic Simpsonian interplay of family psychology, social commentary, and brainy jokes. **B+** (#946, Aug. 3) —LS

## Stardust

PG-13, 125 mins.  
At times, it's like a deluxe *H.R. Pufnstuf*; at others, it's the closest the movies have come in a while to the knowing fairy-tale enchantment of *The Princess Bride*. **B** (#948, Aug. 17) —OG

## Superbad

R, 114 mins.  
This torrentially foul-mouthed comedy of good high school kids gone horny and male friendship cemented by sexual anxiety boasts a gaily dirty, man-boy sweetness. (Secretly, it's so old-fashioned that the girls might as well be wearing bloomers.) **B** (#949/950, Aug. 24) —LS

## The Ten

R, 99 mins.  
The highs are high indeed in a sketch-comedy version of the Ten Commandments. It's like early Woody Allen crossed with late Buñuel. **B+** (#948, Aug. 17) —OG

## Underdog

PG, 81 mins.  
The endearing airborne-beagle effects help to offset the formula twists. **B-** (#948, Aug. 17) —OG

# THE CHART

## BOX OFFICE

# 1

## Superbad

Only fitting that a summer that kicked off with a Judd Apatow comedy hit (*Knocked Up*) should end with one. The \$33.1 million this Jonah Hill and Michael Cera bawdfest made already covers its low budget.



## THE TOP 20

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | WEEKEND GROSS* | NUMBER OF SITES† | WEEKEND PER SITE AVERAGE | PERCENTAGE CHANGE | WEEKS IN RELEASE | GROSS TO DATE |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| 1  | SUPERBAD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | \$33.1         | 2,948            | \$11,212                 | —                 | 1                | \$33.1        |
| 2  | RUSH HOUR 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$21.4         | 3,778            | \$5,652                  | -57               | 2                | \$87.7        |
| 3  | THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$19.9         | 3,701            | \$5,370                  | -40               | 3                | \$164.7       |
| 4  | THE SIMPSONS MOVIE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$6.8          | 3,162            | \$2,160                  | -39               | 4                | \$165.3       |
| 5  | THE INVASION<br>➔ This new take on 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers' might be low on thrills, but its box office bow was nothing short of shocking: Nicole Kidman and Daniel Craig's alien conquest pic had the third-lowest debut this summer for a movie opening on over 2,500 screens. In fourth place: 'Georgia Rule.' Now that's scary. | \$6.0          | 2,776            | \$2,144                  | —                 | 1                | \$6.0         |
| 6  | STARDUST                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | \$5.7          | 2,565            | \$2,203                  | -38               | 2                | \$19.5        |
| 7  | HAIRSPRAY<br>➔ This song-and-dance adaptation of the Broadway smash—which stars Nikki Blonsky and John Travolta—joins an elite club of movie musicals that have grossed over \$100 million. Other members: 'Chicago,' 'Dreamgirls,' and 'Grease.'                                                                                           | \$4.5          | 2,389            | \$1,885                  | -30               | 5                | \$100.8       |
| 8  | UNDERDOG<br>➔ No one's gonna call 'Underdog' a runaway hit, but almost \$32 million for a dog film with no stars isn't too shabby, especially when April's 'Firehouse Dog' grossed less than half as much.                                                                                                                                  | \$3.8          | 2,551            | \$1,509                  | -39               | 3                | \$31.9        |
| 9  | HARRY POTTER 5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$3.7          | 1,955            | \$1,870                  | -33               | 6                | \$278.8       |
| 10 | I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$3.6          | 2,258            | \$1,595                  | -39               | 5                | \$110.5       |
| 11 | BECOMING JANE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | \$2.9          | 1,186            | \$2,475                  | +1                | 3                | \$9.1         |
| 12 | THE LAST LEGION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$2.7          | 2,002            | \$1,372                  | —                 | 1                | \$2.7         |
| 13 | NO RESERVATIONS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | \$2.4          | 1,604            | \$1,473                  | -39               | 4                | \$36.5        |
| 14 | DADDY DAY CAMP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | \$2.0          | 2,332            | \$837                    | -43               | 2                | \$8.9         |
| 15 | TRANSFORMERS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | \$1.9          | 1,206            | \$1,615                  | -40               | 7                | \$306.5       |
| 16 | RATATOUILLE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$1.6          | 1,403            | \$1,172                  | -31               | 8                | \$196.6       |
| 17 | DEATH AT A FUNERAL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | \$1.3          | 260              | \$4,935                  | —                 | 1                | \$1.3         |
| 18 | EL CANTANTE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | \$0.6          | 374              | \$1,713                  | -54               | 3                | \$6.7         |
| 19 | HOT ROD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | \$0.6          | 811              | \$705                    | -74               | 3                | \$13.1        |
| 20 | BRATZ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | \$0.4          | 533              | \$825                    | -69               | 3                | \$8.9         |

SOURCE: NIELSEN EDI. WEEKEND OF AUG. 17-19 \*WEEKEND-GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS  
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Panettiere gets fired up

# Super Troopers

*Heroes* spins gloriously geeky fantasies from decades-old myths and legends.

BY MARC BERNARDIN

## Heroes

Season 1

Hayden

Panettiere, Masi

Oka, Ali Larter

Unrated, 1,009

mins., 2006–07

There's a reason why the adventures of Superman rank among the most enduring stories ever told (69 uninterrupted years and counting): Superheroes speak to the part of us—and we all have it—that hopes, deep down, that we're special. By tapping into our longing, these tales become legend. The one who can fly. The mad scientist. The one who's invulnerable. The Jekyll-and-Hyde. The one who can teleport. The psychic. The seer. And that's why people flocked to *Heroes*: because it was filled with stories that we already knew, presented in a completely different way.

Harnessing the geek critical mass that's been building since the first *Spider*-flick back in '02, *Heroes* captured an audience ready to follow a host of newly superpowered characters: Claire (Panettiere), the very hard-bodied cheerleader; service-oriented brothers Peter and Nathan Petrelli (Milo Ventimiglia and Adrian Pasdar); Hiro Nakamura (Oka), the nerdalicious wage slave; Niki Sanders (Larter), a single mom living twin lives; and Matt Parkman (Greg Grunberg), the cop who hears too much. And *Heroes* learned from the mistakes of continuity-laden shows like *Lost*, which promised fire and delivered smoke: Viewers were constantly rewarded for their vigilance with a series of mini-arcs ("Save

the cheerleader...," "Are you on the list?" etc.) that provided closure while dangling new threads.

The problem with rewarding vigilance is that the vigilant have already gotten their reward. There's not as much joy in rewatching a show that thrived on unraveling twisted plots and discovering hidden connections. At best, you'll check out the first episode again, if only to see how deftly the seeds were planted. But for real kicks, unlock the Fortress of Bonus Features and watch the unaired 73-minute version of the pilot. Creator Tim Kring's commentary walks you through the many changes that took place before that first chapter aired—most notably an entire terrorism subplot that was dropped, partly because a scene of an Islamic extremist hanging himself didn't suit what NBC thought might make a good 8 p.m. show. With that plot intact, we meet Parkman in a whole new way, and the flaming train crash in Odessa, Tex., isn't just an accident. The rest of the extras are what you'd expect from a TV boxed set: occasionally worthwhile deleted scenes (e.g., Parkman explaining the downside of his power to Claire by using a *Twilight Zone* reference that's completely lost on the teen), making-of docs, the odd commentary from cast and crew.

For veterans, the pilot alone will make this set worth buying. For those of you who waited until now to hop on *Heroes*' cape tails...yes, you will believe a man can fly. **A-**



## Backstory

✦ The unaired pilot features an extremist called the Engineer, with the radioactive powers that were, as the series went on, refitted onto Ted "The Exploding Man Who Could Destroy Manhattan" Sprague (Matthew John Armstrong, above).



# Ante Heroes

Card sharks Joe Mantegna and David Mamet get their *Games* on.

BY CHRIS NASHAWATY

## House of Games

Criterion  
Collection

Joe Mantegna,  
Lindsay Crouse

R, 102 mins.,  
1987

In 1984, Joe Mantegna won a Tony for his portrayal of Ricky Roma in David Mamet's *Glengarry Glen Ross*. But when turning the play into a film, the studio wanted a bigger name: Al Pacino. Mamet broke the news to his old pal and, as an

apology, offered him the lead in *House of Games*. It's hard to imagine a better consolation prize.

With a parlor-trick plot and neon-lit cinematography right out of Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, *Games* is a con within a con within a con. And best of all, the audience is the unwitting mark in all of this delicious flimflammy. Crouse (a.k.a. Mrs. Mamet at the time) plays a tightly wound therapist whose thirst for excitement leads her into the fly trap of Mantegna's charismatic hustler, Mike Mancuso. Soon, he's teaching her about poker and the art of the grift...and maybe, or maybe not, taking her to the cleaners in the process. With her icy gestures and robotic delivery of Mamet's staccato dialogue, Crouse is hard to warm to. But Mantegna, smooth as Chinese silk, emerges in his first major screen role as a fully formed star. He oozes double-breasted sharkskin danger.

Aside from a flawless Criterion transfer, the disc's extras include somewhat perfunctory interviews with its two leads, a jazzy commentary track from Mamet and "con consultant"/costar Ricky Jay, and a making-of, which incorporates a home video of one of Mamet's friendly poker games, where macho patter flies like hot shrapnel. **A-**



Full House:  
Mantegna and Crouse

## 5 Reasons to Watch...

### 'FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS'

The fantastic football drama's first season will win cheers from diehards (hurrah for deleted scenes!) and new fans alike



**Kyle Chandler** The actor picks projects (*Early Edition*, *Homefront*) that give critics goose bumps but don't get much ratings love. *FNL* is no different. As coach of the Dillon, Tex., Panthers, Chandler does some of his richest work as an embattled leader scrambling to hold his team—and family—together through fumbles both on and off the field.



**Connie Britton** Wait till the end of the set—let's say episodes 17 to 19—before you dismiss Britton's Tami Taylor as a yummy mummy. Sure, coach's wife is hot, but she's also a study in exquisitely contained cyclones of emotion, especially as daughter Julie (Aimee Teegarden) navigates the deep waters of teenage sexuality. Powerful stuff.



**Football!** ...And yet not. If you're into the pigskin, there's plenty of action—games, practices, the entire town's feverish obsession with what happens on the 50-yard line. But fear not, footballphobes! Athletics never interfere with masterful storytelling and the finest acting you'll see on network TV. Know what they call that? A win/win.



**Hot Guys Who Only Look Like Jailbait** Move past your inappropriate Harry Potter lust with the *FNL* footballers. Zach Gilford (Matt Saracen, left), Scott Porter (Jason Street), and Taylor Kitsch (dirty-hot Tim Riggins) are all worth a look-see, and all well into adulthood. Which makes Riggins' affair with his older neighbor even more watchable.



**You're Smarter Than Emmy Voters** They continually snub *The Wire* and *Battlestar Galactica*, so it's no surprise that Emmy all but ignored this gem. And with episodes like the one in which an assistant coach makes a racial gaffe that leads to plot turns as inspired as they are honest...well, they oughta be ashamed. —Alynda Wheat





### Perfect Stranger

Halle Berry, Bruce Willis  
R, 109 mins., 2007

This preposterous, over-plotted thriller that badly (and I do mean badly) wants to be the next *Basic Instinct* still doesn't resolve whether Berry will ever make a good movie again. The star plays a blank-faced, hot-bodied journalist trying to solve a murder by posing as a temp in suspect Willis' company; Giovanni Ribisi is her twitchy accomplice. Who to blame? How about screenwriter Todd Komarnicki, who, in the **EXTRAS**, praises Ribisi for jamming "a firecracker up the butt of the character." (???) Sadly, the dialogue's not even that good. **D+** —Ty Burr



### Blades of Glory

Will Ferrell, Jon Heder  
PG-13, 93 mins., 2007

Two rival male figure skaters banned from singles competition become pairs partners. If a sequined peacock costume is your idea of comedy at its subtlest, you'll be entertained throughout. **EXTRAS** Deleted scenes and alternate takes get high scores. A quick look at Ferrell and Heder training leaves us wanting more. So does a chat with costars/real-life couple Will Arnett and Amy Poehler, who discuss the likelihood of their potential offspring turning out to be a smoking, Method-acting "little baby Sean Penn." **B** —Mandi Bierly



### Dr. T & the Women

Special Edition  
Richard Gere, Laura Dern  
R, 122 mins., 2000

Gynecologist Sullivan Travis (Gere) knows women. He has to—they're everywhere: dozens of patients, three nieces, two daughters, a sister-in-law, and a wife who is slowly going insane (Farrah Fawcett). A satirical look at Texas socialites, *Dr. T* showcases Robert Altman's famed agility with ensemble casts, yet stumbles in its too-loose approach to storytelling. **EXTRAS** Two new featurettes, the better of which, "Altman's Apprenticeship," discusses his early years at a Kansas City documentary house, where he directed cheesy industrial and safety films. **B+** —Gilbert Cruz

## THE CHART

### DVD SALES

1

300

He vanquished tons of brave Spartans, but even Xerxes couldn't stop this testosterone-filled flick from dominating DVD sales yet again.



### TOP 20

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | LAST WEEK | BOX OFFICE GROSS TO DATE* | WEEKS IN RELEASE | RW GRADE |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1  | 300                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 1         | \$210.6                   | 2                | B+       |
| 2  | DISTURBIA<br>➔ There was nothing disturbing about this thriller for Shia LaBeouf: It brought the 21-year-old star fame, cheers from critics, and extra buzz for his upcoming 'Indy 4' movie.                                                            | —         | \$80.1                    | 1                | B        |
| 3  | TMNT<br>➔ Oscar-nominated Mako (1966's 'The Sand Pebbles'), who voiced Master Splinter in this animated series' latest big-screen version, died at the age of 72—before the movie was completed. The film is dedicated to the Japanese-born actor.      | —         | \$54.1                    | 1                | B-       |
| 4  | ARE WE DONE YET?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | —         | \$49.6                    | 1                | —        |
| 5  | I THINK I LOVE MY WIFE<br>➔ Is there anything that Chris Rock didn't do for his remake of Eric Rohmer's French 'Chloe in the Afternoon'? The comedian co-wrote, directed, produced, and starred. Unfortunately, he couldn't make more people go see it. | —         | \$12.6                    | 1                | C        |
| 6  | HOT FUZZ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 3         | \$23.6                    | 2                | B-       |
| 7  | THE SIMPSONS: SEASON 10                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | —         | —                         | 1                | —        |
| 8  | PATHFINDER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 2         | \$10.2                    | 2                | C+       |
| 9  | ROME: SEASON 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | —         | —                         | 1                | A        |
| 10 | THE NUMBER 23                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 4         | \$35.2                    | 3                | C        |
| 11 | SHOOTER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 8         | \$47.0                    | 7                | B+       |
| 12 | UNACCOMPANIED MINORS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | —         | \$16.7                    | 1                | C+       |
| 13 | ZODIAC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 6         | \$33.1                    | 3                | B+       |
| 14 | FIREHOUSE DOG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 5         | \$13.9                    | 2                | C+       |
| 15 | PREMONITION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 7         | \$47.9                    | 4                | B-       |
| 16 | GHOST RIDER                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 11        | \$115.8                   | 9                | C+       |
| 17 | THE BOURNE FILES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 10        | \$297.8                   | 3                | A-       |
| 18 | THE BOURNE SUPREMACY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 14        | \$176.1                   | 140              | B+       |
| 19 | BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 13        | \$82.3                    | 8                | B        |
| 20 | THE BOURNE IDENTITY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 16        | \$121.7                   | 238              | A-       |

SOURCES: REVENUE TRACK FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUG. 11, 2007; NIELSEN EDI \*IN MILLIONS  
† ORIGINAL THEATRICAL GRADE

## Greetings From...Germany!

### SECRETS AND 'LIVES'

A coldhearted spy discovers his own humanity in *The Lives of Others*



It is 1984, and Big Brother is very real in East Germany, where Wiesler (Ulrich Muehe), a dedicated member of the Stasi secret police, is consumed by hunting traitors. But when the stoic bureaucrat investigates noted playwright Dreyman and his actress girlfriend (Sebastian Koch and Martina Gedeck, left), the seemingly soulless man experiences a moral awakening. While eavesdropping on the couple's every word, kiss, and

song, Wiesler finds his devotion to a decaying system challenged by the passion of the artists. "Can anyone who has heard this music," asks Dreyman from his piano, "I mean truly heard it—really be a bad person?" For Muehe, who had been shadowed by the Stasi in the 1980s, making the Oscar-winning *THE LIVES OF OTHERS* (R, 138 mins., 2007) was an extremely personal experience. His performance is a study in artful stillness, yet there's amazing intensity in his calculated efficiency. Tragically, the actor, who died of cancer in July, "couldn't really enjoy all the success that we had with this film because he encountered so much hatred in Germany...for having spoken about his own past," says director Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck in an enlightening commentary. For those truly listening, however, Muehe's creation is an enduring achievement. **A** —Jeff Labrecque

EW PICK





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Parker and Kirk  
share a brief  
encounter

# Still Smokin'

With its cast of lovable dopes, season 3 of *Weeds* reaches even higher ground.

BY JENNIFER ARMSTRONG

**Weeds**  
Mondays,  
10 p.m.  
Showtime

*Weeds*' first two seasons proved worthy of their namesake—affably addictive, but nothing too dangerous.

Turns out, though, that those were just a tease, a gateway drug leading us to a season 3 that's more potent than anything we'd previously imagined.

Watching Mary-Louise Parker's harried pot-dealing mom, Nancy Botwin, roll her eyes and chew her iced-coffee straw throughout the season-opening deal-gone-bad-gone-worse felt as exhilarating—and well earned—as the roller-coaster plunge that comes after a long, clackety ride to the top. While that intoxicating level of suspense can't possibly sustain throughout the season, subsequent episodes—including a charmingly smarmy Matthew Modine as Nancy's boss at her new “real job”—keep up a nice, if occasionally spotty, momentum.

And not to be too moralistic while watching a Showtime series about a drug-dispensing suburban mother, but it's nice to see the often unnervingly naive Nancy face some serious consequences. It was only a matter of time before she found herself at the wrong end of a gun or, worse, applying for legitimate work. Facing both of those possibilities only takes *Weeds* to a new...um, high—mixing its trademark deadpan humor and heartbreak with the added threat of the genuinely

menacing (if still entertainingly droll) U-Turn (Page Kennedy) and his gang. (Good riddance, I say, to Nancy's stifling relationship with Martin Donovan's now-supposedly-dead DEA agent, Peter.)

It's the kind of genre-defying blend that so many “daring” shows are trying to pull off now—especially during this Summer of Endless Original Cable Programming. But at its best, *Weeds* avoids the blatant whiff of desperate envelope-pushing, thanks to an ensemble with dead-on timing and instincts: Kevin Nealon's creative use of facial product, for instance, took the male-genitalia size-off with his mistress' husband from gratuitous to genius. The mistress herself, Elizabeth Perkins, becomes more watchable the boozier and bitchier she gets. And, oh, that Justin Kirk. Playing Nancy's brother-in-law, Andy, he can make anything work, which is why I'm less concerned about his upcoming storyline-jarring Army stint than I should be—though I prefer him at home playing off all of the above.

Most of all, though, *Weeds* works because of Parker's grounded performance. Whether she's flitting about in search of cell-phone reception while held at gunpoint by gangsters, reacting to Peter's death with one despairing head bob, or unleashing a stripper-worthy “brick dance” during an errand for U-Turn on her way to her son's sentencing (for stealing “Drug Free Zone” signs, natch), she sells it all as just another day in suburbia. And, now more than ever, I'm buying. **A-**



## Backstory

+ *Weeds*' Romany Malco (Conrad) first had a brush with fame as a member of '90s rap group College Boyz, who recorded the hit single “Victim of the Ghetto.” His rhyming skills came in handy when he scored the title role of VH1's 2001 biopic *Too Legit: The MC Hammer Story* (above).



# "Inspiring and Uplifting."

- Jeffrey Lyons, "REEL TALK"/NBC-TV

**The Amazing True Story  
of the Team and the Town  
that Came Back from Tragedy.**



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SCREENPLAY BY COREY HELMAS & JAMIE LINDEN DIRECTED BY JAMIE LINDEN PRODUCED BY MCG  
CASTING BY JAMIE LINDEN  
MUSIC BY BASIL IVANYK  
EDITED BY COREY HELMAS & JAMIE LINDEN  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SHANE HURLBUT, A.S.C.  
PRODUCED BY BRENT O'CONNOR JEANNE ALLGOOD THOMAS TULL SCOTT MEDNICK  
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PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED  
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## Summer School

We've studied up on The N's *The Best Years* and ABC Family's *Greek*, which show two very different sides of college life. —JA

### THE BEST YEARS VS GREEK



#### LEADING LADY

Sam (Charity Shea, left), the moody foster kid who scored a scholarship to Charles University—and now must do everything necessary to keep it.



Casey (Spencer Grammer), a pink-sweatered sorority girl struggling to stay on top socially while helping geeky bro Rusty fit in at Cyprus-Rhodes U.

#### BIGGEST DILEMMA

So many to choose from, like whether she should forgive her long-lost uncle for ditching her after her parents' death.

Does she stay with popular (and cheating) boyfriend Evan or give in to scruffy first love Cappie? OMG, what to do?!

#### THE DANGERS OF BOOZE

Sam nearly gets kicked out of school when she and her buddies get drunk on the dorm roof—and one of them plunges to his death.

Using brain cells to kill brain cells, Rusty uses an Atmospheric Destabilizer Module to fix the beer-spewing volcano for Kappa Tau's homecoming bash.

## SOUND BITES

**"Our purpose is to bring superior souls into *this* family, not give them away to every barren Sue, Jane, and Sally on the block."**

—NICKI (CHLOË SEVIGNY) TO MARGENE (GINNIFER GOODWIN), WHO IS CONSIDERING BEING A SURROGATE MOTHER TO AN INFERTILE COUPLE, ON *BIG LOVE*

**"Well, we did it, but if you want my professional opinion, that boy gayer than a handbag full of rainbows."**

—U-TURN'S HO, AFTER FORCING SANJAY (MAULIK PANCHOLY), A GAY MAN, TO HAVE SEX, ON *WEEDS*

**"I don't wanna party like it's my birthday. I wanna sell my house."**

—JEFF LEWIS, AFTER DISCOVERING THAT HIS STAFF HAD SWITCHED HIS MELLOW "OPEN HOUSE" MUSIC FOR 50 CENT, ON *FLIPPING OUT*

**"I wouldn't be me if I didn't tell you the truth!"**

—STAR JONES REYNOLDS ON DAY ONE OF *STAR JONES*

**"White guys aren't attracted to me. I think my booty's too intimidating or something."**

—FLIRT! COSMETICS ASSISTANT JANJAY ON *THE FASHIONISTA DIARIES*

## THE CHART

### THE RATINGS

#### 1 AMERICA'S GOT TALENT

Treading ground blazed by *Idol*'s Blake Lewis, Butterscotch (right) beatboxed into the finale with "Dance to the Music."



### THE TOP 20

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | VIEWERS* | LAST WEEK |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| 1  | <b>AMERICA'S GOT TALENT</b><br>NBC, Tuesday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 10.8     | 1         |
| 2  | <b>60 MINUTES (R)</b> CBS, Sunday, 7 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 9.9      | 2         |
| 3  | <b>THE SINGING BEE</b> NBC, Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 9.7      | 6         |
|    | <b>HELL'S KITCHEN</b> Fox, Monday, 9 p.m.<br>➔ <i>Rock may have taken home the 'Kitchen' crown and \$250,000, but Fox won big-time too, with the finale of its Gordon Ramsay cooking show drawing the biggest numbers in its three-season history.</i>                            | 9.7      | 8         |
| 5  | <b>SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE</b><br>Fox, Thursday, 8 p.m.<br>➔ <i>Is the dance trend losing its footing? Fox's other big finale of the week—in which Sabra took the title of America's Favorite Dancer—saw a drop of one million viewers from last season's closing episode.</i> | 9.6      | —         |
| 6  | <b>CSI (R)</b> CBS, Thursday, 9 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 9.5      | 3         |
| 7  | <b>TWO AND A HALF MEN (R)</b><br>CBS, Monday, 9 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 9.2      | 7         |
| 8  | <b>WITHOUT A TRACE (R)</b><br>CBS, Thursday, 10 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 9.1      | 4         |
| 9  | <b>SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE</b><br>Fox, Wednesday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 8.7      | 12        |
| 10 | <b>NCIS (R)</b> CBS, Tuesday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 8.5      | —         |
| 11 | <b>CRIMINAL MINDS (R)</b><br>CBS, Wednesday, 9 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 8.3      | 8         |
| 12 | <b>COLD CASE (R)</b> CBS, Sunday, 9 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 8.2      | 12        |
|    | <b>CSI: MIAMI (R)</b> CBS, Monday, 10 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 8.2      | 19        |
| 14 | <b>CSI: NY (R)</b> CBS, Wednesday, 10 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 8.1      | 11        |
| 15 | <b>SO YOU THINK YOU CAN DANCE</b><br>Fox, Monday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 7.9      | —         |
| 16 | <b>POWER OF 10</b> CBS, Wednesday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 7.7      | 16        |
| 17 | <b>BIG BROTHER 8</b> CBS, Tuesday, 9 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 7.6      | 22        |
|    | <b>EXTREME MAKEOVER: HOME EDITION (R)</b><br>ABC, Sunday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 7.6      | 25        |
| 19 | <b>BIG BROTHER 8</b> CBS, Thursday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 7.5      | 16        |
| 20 | <b>BIG BROTHER 8</b> CBS, Sunday, 8 p.m.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 7.4      | 19        |

**OFF THE CHART** Logging 5.2 million viewers in its second week, ABC's video-centric newsmagazine *i-CAUGHT* (No. 39) lost one million—or 16 percent—of its already meager premiere-week audience.

\* IN MILLIONS

WEEK OF AUG. 13–19, 2007

SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH



BY ALYNDA WHEAT

# WHAT to WATCH

A day-to-day guide to notable programs\*

Maria full  
of grace  
(and power)



**MUST  
WATCH  
OF THE  
WEEK**

## MONDAY 2007 US Open USA

### PREVIEW

We won't have Andre Agassi to kick around anymore. Last year's weepy farewell match made great court drama, but there are still plenty of reasons to keep your eye on the ball. For one thing, defending champs Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova return to compete for a share of \$19.6 million in prize money—plus performance-based bonuses (ooh, how corporate!). Before we look ahead, though, the Open takes a look back tonight in a tribute to tennis great Althea Gibson, featuring a song by Aretha Franklin. Talk about a graceful opening volley.

## Monday 8.27

**9-10PM**

### The Closer

TNT, TV-14-LV

Well, well, an accountant set to audit the LAPD gets dead. I'm eyeballin' you, Brenda.

**10-11PM**

### Saving Grace

TNT, TV-MA-L

Grace has to follow even soft Commandments like the ones on lying and coveting. *Sigh...* I wish I could do that. Damn! Just broke both.

**10-11PM\***

### The Anti-Americans

PBS, TV-PG

"Whimsical" take on why Europeans hate us. For stuff besides dismissing them as "whimsical." \*check local listings

### Season Premiere

**10:30-11PM**

### Living With Ed

HGTV, TV-G

Al Gore? Fine. But Ed Begley Jr. being right all along? Cry yourself to sleep with *that*.

## Tuesday 8.28

### Series Debut

**8-8:30PM**

### The Education of Ms. Groves

Sundance, TV-PG

Wide-eyed young teacher gets her own doc series.

**9-10PM**

### Eureka

Sci Fi, TV-PG-LV

One of the geniuses decides to re-create the universe! Ooh, sounds like eggheady fun. One teensy question: Where's he gonna put it?

**9-10PM**

### Big Brother 8

CBS

We haven't looked at Dick the same since we found out his big celeb friend is Dilana from *Rock Star: Supernova*.

### Series Finale

**10-11PM**

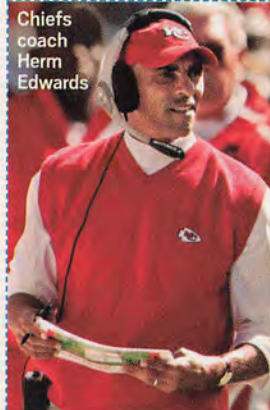
### The Bronx Is Burning

ESPN, TV-PG

In another case of TV saving us from reading, or learning anything, we find out how Reggie became Mr. October.

## Wednesday 8.29

Chiefs  
coach  
Herm  
Edwards



### PREVIEW

**10-11PM**

### Hard Knocks

HBO

On the field, in the locker room, we're even in the Kansas City Chiefs' dorms during their five weeks at training camp. *Hard Knocks* continues its unprecedented access to preseason pros—engaging TV even for nonfans who thought Priest Holmes was a dude who conducted sermons.



## Thursday 8.30



La Monde Byrd, John Slattery, and Jon Hamm perform a hat trick

**10-11PM**

**Mad Men** AMC, TV-14-L

The Madison Avenue period piece from former *Sopranos* scribe Matthew Weiner gets deeper and richer each week as the show goes from macro (What does America want in 1960?) to micro (Who is Don Draper?). Transference is tonight's theme, as emotions spill in all the wrong directions. A boss hits on a staffer's wife and she takes the blame. A woman strikes out at a friend instead of at the man who hurt her. A secretary substitutes a cherry danish for sex. What's it all mean? Who the hell knows? For now we're just reveling in the beautifully precise details. **A-**

## Friday 8.31

**8-10PM**

**13 Going on 30**

Fox, TV-PG-DL

Where's Jennifer Garner? Prob'ly crying after getting served by the "Thriller"-loving prisoners of the Philippines' Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center.

**8-8:30PM**

**South of Nowhere**

The N, TV-PG-L

I won't insult your intelligence by pretending to know who Madison and Ashley are, but I do wish to inform you that they will be going clubbing. Kids.

**8:30-9PM**

**Meerkat Manor**

Animal Planet, TV-G

Houdini's stepping to Flower. A honey like that needs *The Pickup Artist* skillz, na'mean, Hou? First you gotta "neg" her by telling her she'd be real cute if she lost a few ounces, then wait for her to come to you.

## Saturday 9.01



After-school special treatment: Hughes with teachers

**9-10PM**

**How Do I Look?** Style, TV-PG

We can mock hostess Finola Hughes for tottering on platform sandals amidst the detritus of the Lower Ninth Ward. We can wonder if *Look* has any right doing its 100th episode makeovers in post-Katrina New Orleans at all—but then we meet teachers Carla, Barbara, and Kemberly. It's not just that these women deserve pampering, there's the simple fact that when hurricanes wash away houses they take clothes with them. When Barbara compares herself to the "bare...colorless" city she found after the storm, you know *Look* is doing good. **B**

## Sunday 9.02

**5-7PM**

**Mansquito**

Sci Fi, TV-14-LV

*Ice Spiders*, *Larva*, *Supergator*, this—we could fight over which is best. But to do that we'd have to watch them all. Soooo, time to get started!

**9-10PM**

**Ice Road Truckers:**

**Off the Ice**

History, TV-PG-L

A two-part reunion special, which kinda implies some of them survived. Guess I should've put a spoiler alert on that. Sorry.

**Season Finale**

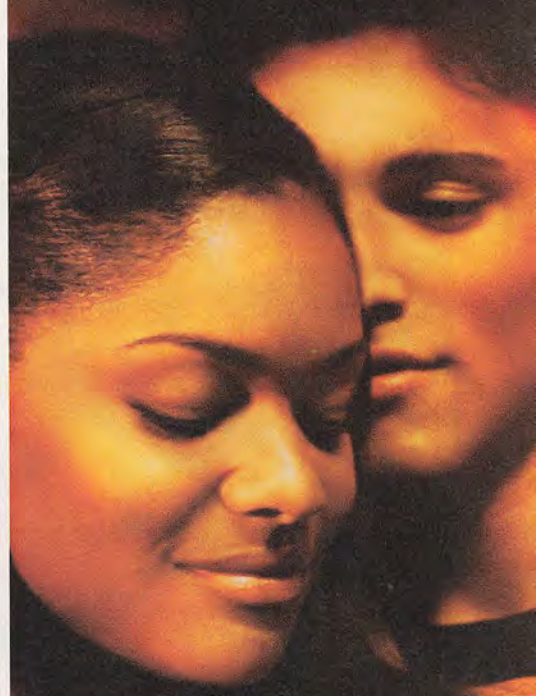
**10-10:30PM**

**Entourage**

HBO, TV-MA

The boys are at Cannes, and they're having trouble selling *Medellin*. What? You mean the viewing public couldn't care less about the pointless rambling of a soulless, solipsistic ~~actor~~ drug dealer? Shocking.

# THE HIT ABC FAMILY ORIGINAL SERIES



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Our neighborhood



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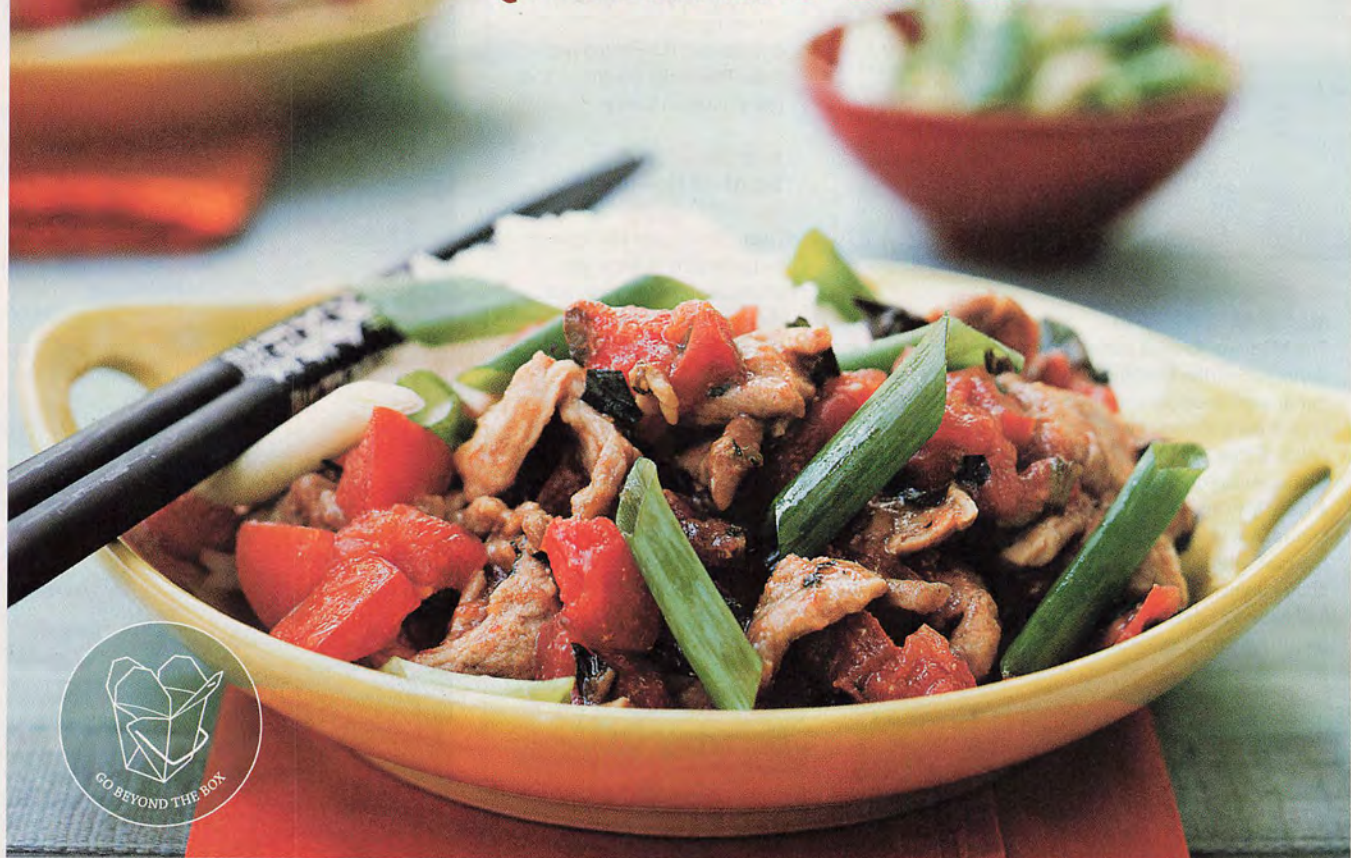
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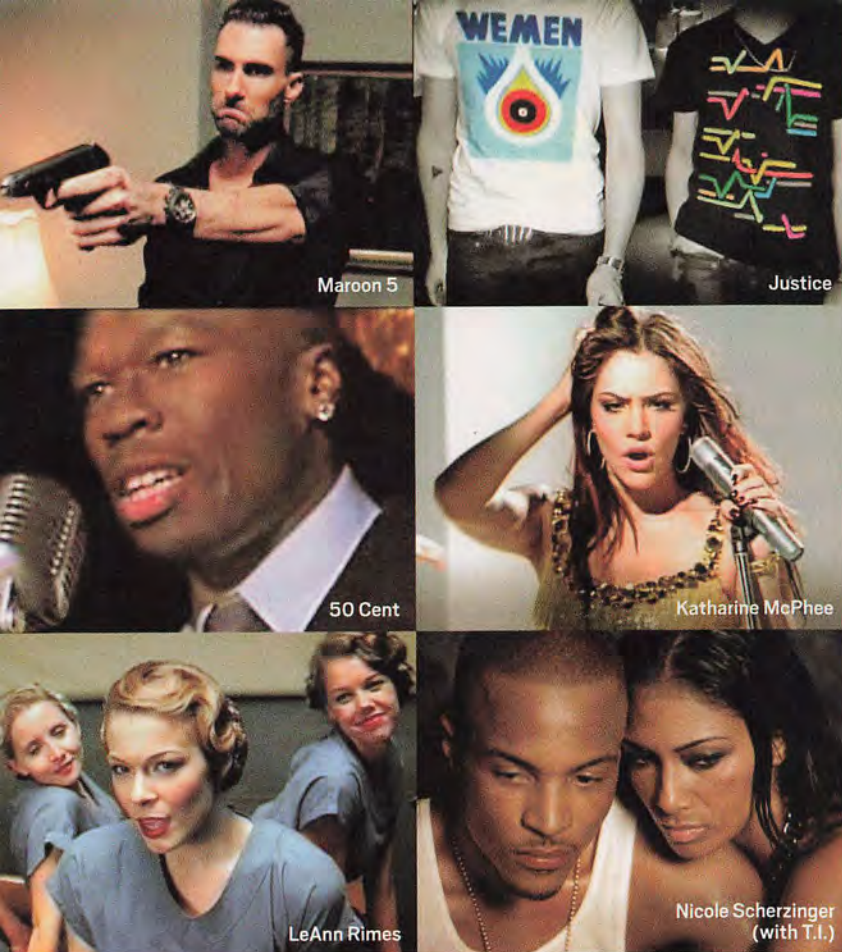


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Maroon 5

Justice

50 Cent

Katharine McPhee

LeAnn Rimes

Nicole Scherzinger  
(with T.I.)

## Vision Quest

You've heard the latest batch of singles, but how do they look? EW critiques the videos.

BY LEAH GREENBLATT

When new-wave novelties the Buggles infamously claimed that video killed the radio star, MTV was just a bratty little baby. Today, however, there is hardly such a thing as a radio star *without* a video. Below, we separate the haves from the have-lesses in current high-profile clips.

### MAROON 5, "Wake Up Call"

**The Premise** Guns! Explosions! Girls in scanty panties! The blue-eyed-soul boys play the leads in a quick-cut, flashy thriller about cheated-hearts retribution.

**Does It Work?** Surprisingly, yes. Though patently confusing (is the band being wiretapped? Why?) and vaguely misogynistic, the ending—in which the hunter, singer Adam Levine, becomes the hunted—is rather satisfying. **B+**

### 50 CENT, "Follow My Lead"

**The Premise** Fiddy goes to see shrink Dustin Hoffman (!) about his lady problems, then croon-raps for a nightclub audience, with R&B love cat Robin Thicke on backup.

**Does It Work?** Not quite. The unlucky-in-love sentiment is kind of marred by sweet nothings like "If you act like a bitch, I'll call you a bitch, then hang up." **C**

### LEANN RIMES, "Nothin' Better to Do"

**The Premise** Think 1940s women's-prison flick meets *Chicago*: iron bars, pin curls, and jazz hands.

**Does It Work?** Indeed. This is not the "How Do I Live" LeAnn of yesteryear. All grown up—in red lips, a prison-issue mini, and garter belt—she's a pretty smooth criminal. **A-**

### JUSTICE, "D.A.N.C.E."

**The Premise** The underdog nominee for a Video of the Year VMA is a low-tech marvel. Two faceless guys, filmed in black and white, walk side by side wearing colorful T-shirts adorned with animated, ever-morphing graphics.

**Does It Work?** *Oui*. The French dance-rock duo's playful tune already had us at *bonjour*, and this simple clip just makes the bigger-budget stuff look bloated and tired. **A**

### KATHARINE MCPHEE, "Love Story"

**The Premise** Whoa. In this gloriously plotless clip, the once-demure *American Idol* runner-up has apparently become a model student in the Beyoncé School of Booty Shaking and Big Hair.

**Does It Work?** Affirmative, though all the sexiness is sort of like watching your little sister get ready for her first big date. Does she know how much trouble boys can be? **B+**

### NICOLE SCHERZINGER, "Whatever U Like"

**The Premise** In a dystopian underworld, the lead Pussycat is mauled by men and trapped, *Boxing Helena*-style. At least she gets to keep her limbs.

**Does It Work?** Not so much. It badly needs levity—and more of the T.I. cameo—but Nicole's slinky metronome hips still mesmerize. **B-**



### EW EXCLUSIVE

+ SEAN KINGSTON, "BEAUTIFUL GIRLS" (ALT. VERSION)  
His "Stand by Me"—sampling ode to PYTs is one of the most ubiquitous songs—and clips—of the summer. Now go to EW.com to catch the other video (without awkwardly censored lyrics), which features the teen in an Ed Sullivan setting.



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# Smart Mouth

On *Pass*, rapper Aesop Rock deftly weaves some clever yarns.

BY NEIL DRUMMING



**Aesop Rock**

**None Shall Pass**  
(Definitive Jux)  
*Rap*

In two weeks, we'll be inundated with 50 Cent mania. Sure, the guy's got a knack for infectious club anthems, but his sex metaphors ("Candy Shop," "Magic Stick") don't exactly strain the cerebrum. Why not, in the interim, enjoy some rap that demands—and rewards—

serious contemplation, like this moody, eccentric brain-teasing set from indie giant Aesop Rock?

Spewing tongue twisters ("Notice how the phobias appropriately procreate"), Aesop could seem a mere syllable-cramming show-off. But after repeated listenings to the Long Island rapper's fifth disc, his dazzling verbal pointillism resolves into clever rants and full-blown stories such as "Fumes" and "The Harbor Is Yours." The latter is either a parable about obsession or, in the tradition of Slick Rick's tall tales, just a whopper about



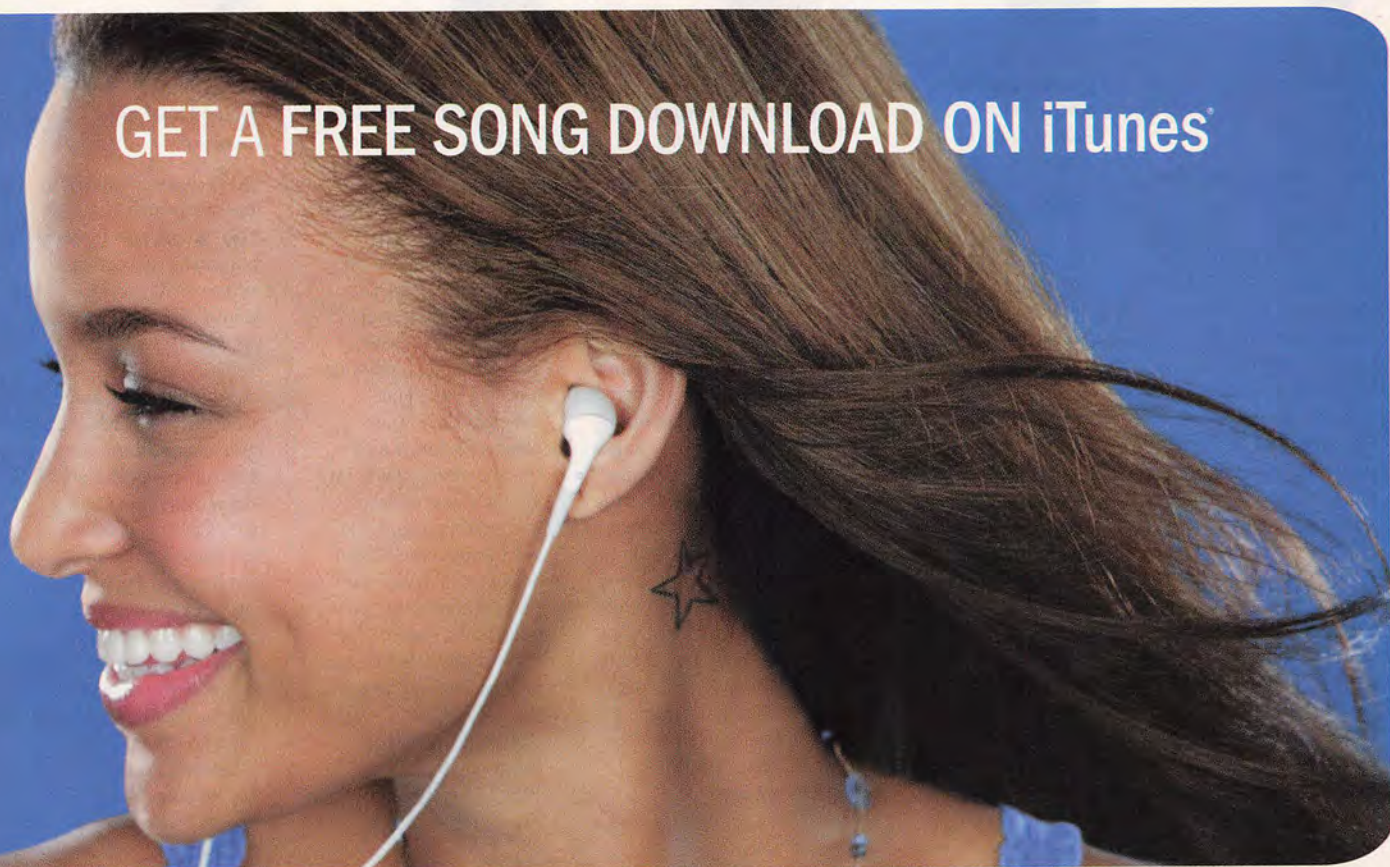
Aesop conjures up far-out rhymes

a pirate who believes in mermaids. "Yaar, heckled by the swabbies at the bar," Aesop rhymes. "He'll be the laughingstock of the Barbary Coast war."

It's heady but fun stuff, eased along by bluesy, turgid grooves from frequent collaborators Blockhead and El-P, as well as Aesop himself. And lest you think radio-friendly thugs have a monopoly on catchy choruses, check out the hook on "Bring Back Pluto": "All I thought of was the cloven hooves and how they clip, clip, clop over the woven roofs." Okay, it ain't "Go shawty, it's your birthday," but Aesop's wordplay will grow on you—and maybe expand your vocabulary at the same time. **A-** **DOWNLOAD THIS:** "Citronella"

**"His dazzling verbal pointillism resolves into clever rants and full-blown stories."**

## GET A FREE SONG DOWNLOAD ON iTunes®





## So You Think You Can Dance?

Rapper Jason Fox's video for "Aunt Jackie" has instigated the biggest silly-dance frenzy since last year's "Chicken Noodle Soup." Want to join the fun? Fox, 22, who was inspired by a pal's relative—"She's elderly [ahem, late 50s], so that's how she dances"—walks EW through the moves. —Simon Vozick-Levinson



**STEP 1**

Join both hands near upper torso and pump them forward. Think of it as "a groovy Heimlich," Fox explains.



**STEP 2**

Lift hands up high; clap once. "Some people swing [their hands] around their heads, some over their shoulders."



**STEP 3**

Extend arms, shimmy hips, then sidestep. But "there's no one way to do it," he concedes. "People add their own flair."



**STEP 4**

Jump in place, clicking heels. "All the kids have to do is see it on YouTube, and in 10 seconds, they've got it down pat."



### Cartel

Cartel  
(Epic)  
*Pop/Rock*

Yup, Cartel are the same Georgia fivesome that wrote this (their second) album in the fishbowl of MTV's *Band in a Bubble* in May. But don't hold it against them. The group's wistfully anthemic power pop goes down so easy—think Gin Blossoms crossed with XTC—that only a card-carrying curmudgeon could deny its uplifting effervescence. For our part, the giddy sing-along "This Is Who We Are" has single-handedly forced us to reconsider our ban on the nonword *bubblicious*. **B+** —Tom Sinclair  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:** "This Is Who We Are"



### Yung Joc

Hustlenomics  
(Block Ent./  
Bad Boy South)  
*Rap*

This 24-year-old is hardly the only rising Southern rap star obsessed with boosting his bottom line. But unlike many of his peers (Young Jeezy, Rick Ross), Joc actually makes a life of ceaseless capitalist calculation—or "hustlenomics"—sound like a lot of fun. With his sophomore effort, the rhymester confidently wraps his unhurried drawl around the hugest, most sparkling synths that exec producer P. Diddy's riches can buy. Yung though he is, Joc just may be a credible rival to T.I. as the reigning king of ATL swagger. **A-** —SVL  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:** "Coffee Shop"



### Michael McDermott

Noise From Words  
(One Little Indian)  
*Folk Rock*

With his husky voice and rootsy style, McDermott has spent his career working to emulate one Boss: Bruce Springsteen. On his eighth CD (his first since an '04 coke bust landed him briefly in jail), McDermott shoots for *Nebraska*-esque sobriety but delivers something closer to the poppier sound of old tourmates the Wallflowers. Like that band, he knows his way around a ballad: "All My Love" brims with sincerity, despite lines such as "All we are is all we are right now." A poet he is not, but McDermott has blue-collar heart to spare. **B** —David Greenwald  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:** "All My Love"



### Various Artists

Guilt by Association  
(Engine Room Recordings)  
*Rock*

Too often, the sound on indie-covers collections is a little muffled—you know, by all those tongues lodged so firmly in cheeks. On the surface, this comp of "guilty favorites" seems suspect: witty, urbane Luna crooning Paula Abdul's "Straight Up"? Music-blogger Swede-hearts the Concretes turning Take That's "Back for Good" into a smoky elegy? And yet it works. Will Oldham does Mariah! Devendra Banhart channels Oasis! Good times. Except when it's not: Mike Watt, please step far, far away from Blue Öyster Cult. **B** —LG  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:** Petra Hayden's "Don't Stop Believin'"



### Joe Nichols

Real Things  
(Universal South)  
*Country*

Nichols, one of Nashville's few Young Turks who kick it old-school, took the easy route on his last outing, *III*, with sexed-up novelty songs ("Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off"). Mercifully, album No. 4 finds him exploring emotional depth again. Nichols still brings a youthfulness to the up-tempo fantasy "Comin' Back in a Cadillac," but it's soulful ballads like "My Whiskey Years" that best showcase his rich baritone—a sinewy blend of Merle Haggard/Randy Travis vulnerability—and put him in a league with the masters. **A-** —Alanna Nash  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:** "My Whiskey Years"





**N.O.R.E.**  
Noreality  
(Babygrande)  
*Rap*

Is Victor Santiago kidding? That was the question in the late '90s when the Queens-born rapper (then known as Noreaga) exaggerated his short-tempered hoodlum persona to the brink of absurdity on hits like "Superthug." Sure enough, he's as hyperaggressive as ever on this fifth solo release. But while foulmouthed rants like "Paternity Test" wear out their welcome, N.O.R.E. manages to channel his ire into several focused performances ("I'ma Get You," "The Rap Game"). Maybe we shouldn't send him off to anger management just yet. **B**—SVL  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:**  
"I'ma Get You"



**Architecture in Helsinki**  
Places Like This  
(Polyvinyl)  
*Indie Rock*

A more literal group would have named themselves Twee Electro-Pop in Melbourne, but there's nothing straightforward about this Australian sextet. Singer Cameron Bird suffers from a very specific type of audio ADD: On his band's buzzing, busy third album, he leaps from synthy party jams to steel-drum rocking tropicalia. It's a scattershot approach that's often frustrating. But when one of his madcap schemes works (such as in the sublimely sloppy calypso-infused "Heart It Races"), the results are exhilarating. **B**—Andy Greenwald  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:**  
"Heart It Races"



**Terence Blanchard**  
A Tale of God's Will  
(Blue Note)  
*Jazz*

Never have the New Orleans-based trumpeter's dual careers—as jazz band-leader and film composer—dovetailed with such purpose. This "Requiem for Katrina" blends his score for Spike Lee's doc *When the Levees Broke* with new music. Accompanied by an orchestra, Blanchard's quintet moves elegantly from African rhythms to modern swing to balladic repose, his horn's curled pleas and soaring declarations channeling both pain and resilience. It's the Katrina story CNN can't tell, masterfully told. **A**—Larry Blumenfeld  
**>DOWNLOAD THIS:**  
"Levees"

EW  
PICK

# THE CHART

## TOP ALBUMS

# 1 'HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL 2'

The Disney kids' 615K bow was the year's second best to date.



## THE TOP 20

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | LAST WEEK | WEEKS ON CHART |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1  | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br><i>High School Musical 2</i> soundtrack, Disney                                                                                                                                                                     | —         | 1              |
| 2  | <b>MILEY CYRUS</b><br><i>Hannah Montana 2/Meet... Disney/Hollywood</i>                                                                                                                                                                        | 4         | 8              |
| 3  | <b>DAVE MATTHEWS AND TIM REYNOLDS</b><br><i>Live at Radio City</i> , ATO/RCA<br>➔ The two consummate live performers came together in New York City this April to record this disc, which 75K loyal fans bought.                              | —         | 1              |
| 4  | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br><i>NOW That's What I Call Music! Vol. 25</i> , Universal                                                                                                                                                            | 3         | 5              |
| 5  | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br><i>Hairspray</i> soundtrack, New Line                                                                                                                                                                               | 6         | 6              |
| 6  | <b>UGK</b> <i>Underground Kingz</i> , Jive                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1         | 2              |
| 7  | <b>FERGIE</b> <i>The Dutchess</i> , Interscope                                                                                                                                                                                                | 8         | 48             |
| 8  | <b>JONAS BROTHERS</b> <i>Jonas Brothers</i> , Hollywood                                                                                                                                                                                       | 5         | 2              |
| 9  | <b>PLIES</b> <i>The Real Testament</i> , Big Gates/Atlantic                                                                                                                                                                                   | 2         | 2              |
| 10 | <b>COMMON</b> <i>Finding Forever</i> , G.O.O.D. Music/Geffen                                                                                                                                                                                  | 7         | 3              |
| 11 | <b>T.I. T.I. vs. T.I.P.</b> , Grand Hustle/Atlantic                                                                                                                                                                                           | 9         | 7              |
| 12 | <b>LINKIN PARK</b><br><i>Minutes to Midnight</i> , Machine Shop/Warner Bros.                                                                                                                                                                  | 12        | 14             |
| 13 | <b>NICKELBACK</b><br><i>All the Right Reasons</i> , Roadrunner                                                                                                                                                                                | 15        | 98             |
| 14 | <b>AMY WINEHOUSE</b><br><i>Back to Black</i> , Universal Republic                                                                                                                                                                             | 13        | 23             |
| 15 | <b>PARAMORE</b> <i>Riot!</i> , Fueled by Ramen<br>➔ Thanks, no doubt, to killer single "Misery Business" and a prime spot on this year's Warped Tour, the punk outfit sold 33K copies of their album and jumped up 28 spots in a single week. | 43        | 10             |
| 16 | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br><i>High School Musical</i> soundtrack, Disney                                                                                                                                                                       | 28        | 84             |
| 17 | <b>TAYLOR SWIFT</b> <i>Taylor Swift</i> , Big Machine                                                                                                                                                                                         | 16        | 43             |
| 18 | <b>BLAQK AUDIO</b> <i>Cexcells</i> , Interscope<br>➔ 'Cex' sells—and so do side projects! This group, featuring Davey Havok and Jade Puget of dark-rock maestros AFI, moved a respectable 29K units.                                          | —         | 1              |
| 19 | <b>SEAN KINGSTON</b><br><i>Sean Kingston</i> , Beluga Heights/Epic                                                                                                                                                                            | 14        | 3              |
| 20 | <b>KIDZ BOP KIDS</b> <i>Kidz Bop 12</i> , Razor & Tie                                                                                                                                                                                         | 11        | 3              |

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## Now for an Endorsement From... ELTON JOHN

Why U.K. electro act Just Jack rocks his world

He's been in the biz for 30-some years, but Elton John still gets giddy when he hears a good tune, and has long done his part to support up-and-coming artists. Among then-lesser-known discs he's passed around to friends over the years: Moby's *Play*, the Killers' *Hot Fuss*, and Amy Winehouse's *Back to Black*. So what's the piano-pop pioneer's latest obsession? North London electro-rap wunderkind Jack Allsopp, a.k.a. Just Jack (inset). After hearing Allsopp's 2003 debut, *The Outer Marker*, John helped get the newbie signed to his management company. (John has since sold the company, but remains on its roster.) On the eve of the U.S. release of Jack's sophomore CD, *Overtones*, Sir Elton explains why he continues to sing Allsopp's praises:

"The thing with Jack, he's melody-oriented. His is a very English-sounding record, with so much beautiful instrumentation. Still, there's touches of Prince in it, there's touches of Beatles in it, there's touches of jazz in it. It's fantastically mature for someone who's only on his second album. He's a cheeky and amiable guy like Robbie Williams. He's also got a great presence, full of life and positivity. His live shows are like a party." —SVL







*Lewis & Clark*

IMAGINE

A MILITARY EXPEDITION  
NOTABLE FOR THE BATTLES  
THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN.



When Lewis & Clark and the Corps of Discovery set out 200 years ago to find an all-water route across North America, they were indeed members of a military expedition. But what

distinguished them wasn't just their bravery or their skills as explorers. It was their ability to get



Peace medals given out by Lewis & Clark, commissioned by Thomas Jefferson

along with almost everyone they encountered. Travelling 8000 miles across an unknown continent is amazing. But relying on hand signals and interpreters to

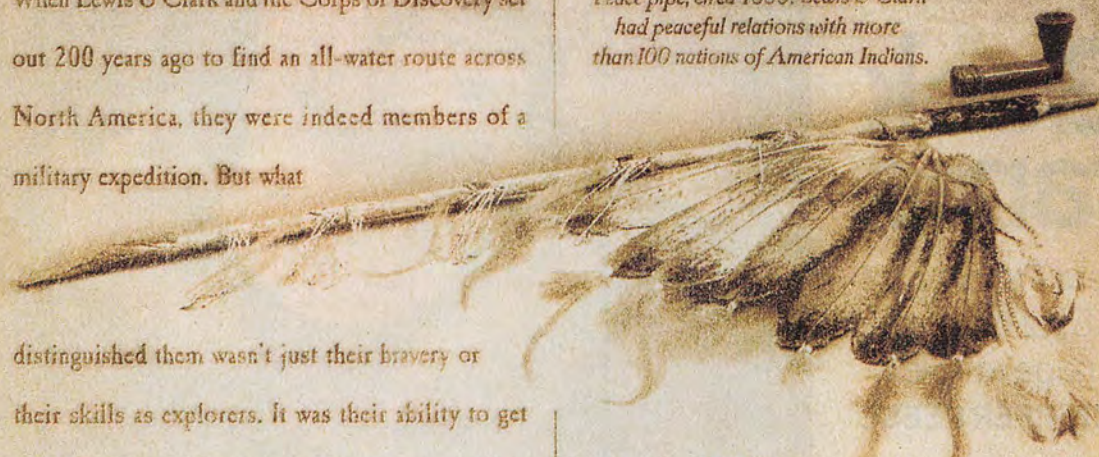
avoid conflict and coexist with more than 100 nations of American Indians is miraculous. In fact, during Lewis & Clark's first winter in the Mandan villages, Indians from hundreds of miles away came to see them. They set aside presumptions and prejudices and, for the most part, embraced each other. They were fascinated



**WALK WITH THEM AND SEE WHAT YOU DISCOVER.**

[WWW.LEWISANDCLARK200.ORG](http://WWW.LEWISANDCLARK200.ORG)

Peace pipe, circa 1800. Lewis & Clark had peaceful relations with more than 100 nations of American Indians.



by each other's

differences rather than intimidated by them. Today people are persecuted because they look different.

In 1804, that's precisely why Lewis & Clark may have survived. So what

did Lewis & Clark do so well that others, later,



Lewis used this spy glass on the journey.

would not do half as well? What can we learn today from a 200-year-old story? Visit

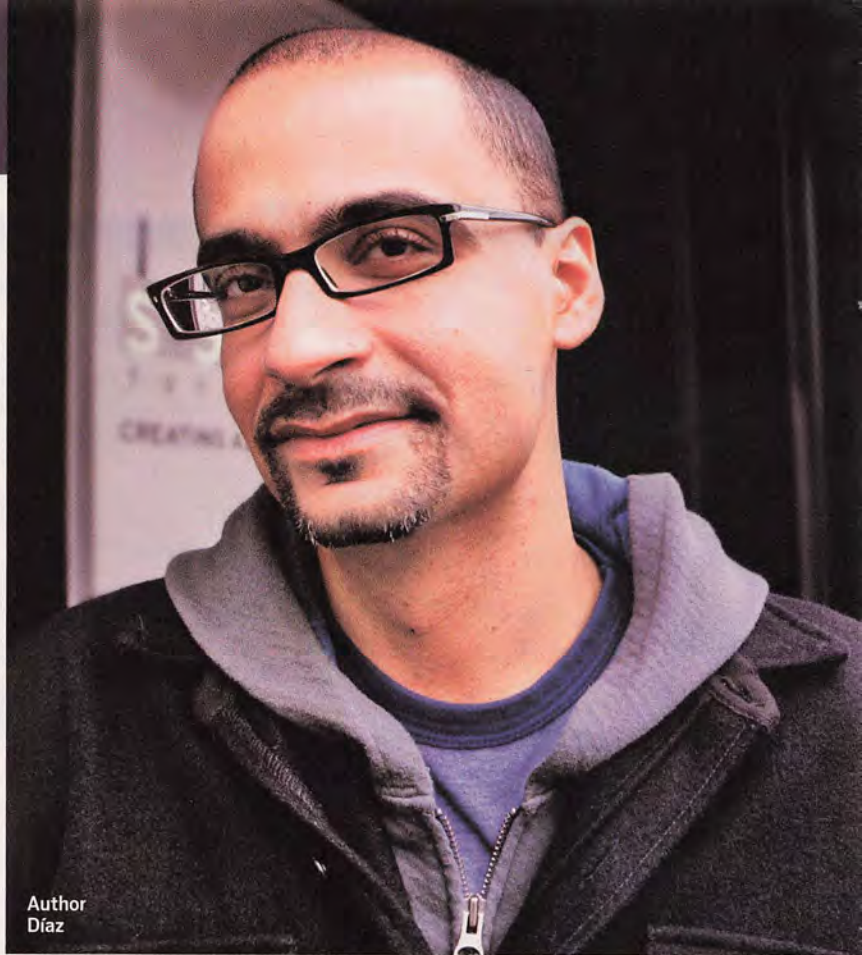
[LewisandClark200.org](http://LewisandClark200.org) and see what you discover. Because their trail winds through us all.



## Geek Drama

What's in a nerd? In his first novel, Junot Díaz creates a memorable teenage outsider.

BY JENNIFER REESE



Author  
Díaz

The Brief  
Wondrous  
Life of  
Oscar Wao  
Junot Díaz

**The Brief  
Wondrous  
Life of  
Oscar Wao**  
Junot Díaz  
*Debut Novel*



### Backstory

+ Rafael Trujillo, who ruled the Dominican Republic from 1930 to 1961, is pivotal in *Oscar Wao*. Díaz describes the dictator (above) as “a portly, sadistic, pig-eyed mulatto who bleached his skin... and had a fondness for Napoleon-era haberdashery.”

It's been 11 years since Junot Díaz published his acclaimed story collection, *Drown*, and he has spent the time well, honing the sharp, slangy voice that propels his terrific first novel, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Narrated in high-energy Spanglish, the book is packed with wide-ranging cultural references—to *Dune*, Julia Alvarez, *The Sound of*

*Music*—as well as erudite and hilarious footnotes on Caribbean history. It is a joy to read, and every bit as exhilarating to reread.

Oscar “Wao” De León, the story’s sweet-souled hero, is a pudgy New Jersey kid with a body out of a Daniel Clowes comic book and a head full of *Gamma World* and Isaac Asimov. Oscar’s got woes: “You really want to know what being an X-Man feels like? Just be a smart bookish boy of color in a contemporary U.S. ghetto. Mamma mia! Like having bat wings or a pair of tentacles growing out of your chest.” In the early chapters, Díaz mines Oscar’s geekiness for its pathos and humor, starting with his crushes (“he had secret loves all over town, the kind of curly-haired big-bodied girls who wouldn’t have said boo to a loser like him”) and moving on to his nerd-boy attempts to transform into “one of those Domini-

can cats everybody’s always going on about.”

Oscar’s inability to reinvent himself may be his noblest trait, for “those Dominican cats” bring nothing but trouble. The novel’s darker themes emerge as Díaz moves backward and sideways in time, delving into the lives of Oscar’s mother, Beli, a legendary beauty with “a cuerpazo so berserk that only a pornographer or a comic book artist could have designed it with a clear conscience,” and his older sister, Lola, who can’t wear shorts without causing traffic jams.

Oscar’s clan has experienced a long run of terrible luck—murders, torture, exodus from their native Dominican Republic—which they blame on *fukú*, an ancient curse. In fact, their misfortunes typically begin with sex: The family’s gorgeous women wield erotic power over coldhearted, hypermale hombres—including real-life Dominican strongman Rafael Trujillo—who maintains brute power over the world at large. The consequences of the liaisons are often tragic.

Because Oscar is not a typical Dominican cat—“Dude wore his nerdiness like a Jedi wore his light saber or a Lensman her lens”—when the hapless protagonist is sucked into the erotic maelstrom, he momentarily changes its current, emerging as an unlikely hero. Oscar’s story is indeed brief, but, like this novel, it is also quite wondrous. **A-**

**EW  
PICK**



## Bones to Ashes

Kathy Reichs

Mystery



This latest thriller featuring Reichs' headstrong forensic anthropologist heroine, Temperance Brennan, is best not read after lunch. Tempe's case is packed with corpses knocked off in all sorts of gruesome ways: They've been shot, burned, and drowned. The central mystery involves a set of missing girls, a pornography ring, and Tempe's long-lost childhood friend. Reichs, a real-life forensic anthropologist whose work inspired Fox's series *Bones*, nails the scientific mumbo jumbo. She also infuses the story with disturbing descriptions (fingers are "lumpy and waxy-white, like oatmeal congealed on the bottom of a pot") that chill to the bone. **B+** —Paul Katz

## The Shotgun Rule

Charlie Huston

Thriller



EW PICK

Ooo-wee, what a righteously nasty imagination Huston has. If you don't know this fervid writer of thrillers (*Caught Stealing*) and comic books (*Moon Knight*), this standalone novel is a great place to start. It's 1983, and four young teens ride their bikes into peril: What begins as a prank theft turns into home-meth-lab gonzo peril. And one father's long-buried past helps set up an explosive ending. Huston terrifically re-creates the time period—read the boys' squabbling debate about the bands Devo, Depeche Mode, and A Flock of Seagulls. *Shotgun* is wise about the way boys grow into men, and roots its violence in understandable emotion. **A-** —Ken Tucker

## The Reincarnationist

M.J. Rose

Thriller



Rose's new, Rome-set thriller opens with a bomb in a baby carriage. Photojournalist Josh Ryder, injured in the explosion, begins experiencing intense episodes wherein he imagines he is a pagan Roman priest madly in love with one of the vestal virgins. Ryder goes in search of the "memory stones," whose history can be traced back to Egypt and India and are said to prove reincarnation. *The Da Vinci Code* casts a long shadow here, and many elements will seem familiar: skulduggery in a European capital, relics inscribed with strange symbols, thievery, murder, and a female sidekick as brilliant as she is comely. Still, it's a load of silly fun. **B** —Karen Karbo

# THE CHARTS

## HARDCOVER BEST-SELLERS

1

## HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS

Seems some Potter fans weren't in a rush to avoid spoilers four weeks ago.



## FICTION TOP 10

|    |                                                                                                                                                                        | WEEKS ON LIST |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1  | <b>HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS</b><br>J. K. Rowling                                                                                                           | 4             |
| 2  | <b>A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS</b> Khaled Hosseini                                                                                                                        | 12            |
| 3  | <b>DEVIL MAY CRY</b> Sherrilyn Kenyon                                                                                                                                  | 1             |
| 4  | <b>SANDWORMS OF DUNE</b><br>Brian Herbert and Kevin J. Anderson<br>→ The authors wrap Frank Herbert's original sci-fi series, but promise more new 'Dune' titles.      | 1             |
| 5  | <b>THE QUICKIE</b> James Patterson and Michael Ledwidge                                                                                                                | 6             |
| 6  | <b>THE SECRET SERVANT</b> Daniel Silva                                                                                                                                 | 3             |
| 7  | <b>SPOOK COUNTRY</b> William Gibson<br>→ Gibson's thriller, which tracks three spies from very unique backgrounds, has 153,000 copies in print after three print runs. | 1             |
| 8  | <b>HIGH NOON</b> Nora Roberts                                                                                                                                          | 5             |
| 9  | <b>THE TIN ROOF BLOWDOWN</b> James Lee Burke                                                                                                                           | 4             |
| 10 | <b>WAKING WITH ENEMIES</b> Eric Jerome Dickey<br>→ This follow-up to spring's thriller 'Sleeping With Strangers' has 100,000 copies in print.                          | 1             |

## NONFICTION TOP 10

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                  | WEEKS ON LIST |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1  | <b>THE SECRET</b> Rhonda Byrne                                                                                                                                                                   | 32            |
| 2  | <b>CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS—CHANGE YOUR LIFE</b><br>Wayne W. Dyer                                                                                                                                    | 2             |
| 3  | <b>THE DANGEROUS BOOK FOR BOYS</b><br>Conn and Hal Iggliden                                                                                                                                      | 15            |
| 4  | <b>THE WEIGHT LOSS CURE "THEY" DON'T WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT</b> Kevin Trudeau                                                                                                                    | 10            |
| 5  | <b>YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE</b><br>Duane "Dog" Chapman<br>→ The bounty hunter's A&E show draws 2 million weekly viewers. There are 210,000 copies of his memoir out after five press runs. | 1             |
| 6  | <b>GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS 2008</b>                                                                                                                                                               | 1             |
| 7  | <b>LONE SURVIVOR</b> Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson                                                                                                                                        | 9             |
| 8  | <b>QUIET STRENGTH</b> Tony Dungy and Nathan Whitaker                                                                                                                                             | 5             |
| 9  | <b>IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM</b> Denise Jackson and Ellen Vaughn                                                                                                                                        | 2             |
| 10 | <b>A LONG WAY GONE</b> Ishmael Beah                                                                                                                                                              | 26            |

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, WEEK OF AUG. 8-14, 2007

## COVER STORIES



Seven years ago, photographer Thomas Allen took one of his uncle's old pulp paperbacks, with two men in a fistfight on the cover. "I started cutting it and the guys flew off the page," says Allen, 44. "I realized by cutting and revealing only parts of them, I can actually alter what's going on in the painting." *Uncovered* (Aperture, \$24.95) collects 28 of Allen's bookish photos, all shot without high-tech manipulation.

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THE FINAL CUT

# RAGE AT THE MACHINE

By Mark Harris

For those of us who love movies and write about them for a living, there's almost nothing more frustrating than seeing a film that you admire tremendously, and knowing that whatever your arsenal of passion or rhetoric may contain, it's probably not going to be enough to convince anyone to go. The most powerful and intelligent movie I've seen this summer deserves a much larger audience than it's getting. It's called *No End in Sight*, and it's a documentary about the war in Iraq.

Click. I just felt your receptors switch off, your interest flee to the margins, your thumb move ominously to the corner of the page (or the mouse). I don't blame you. The phrase "Iraq documentary" can, at this point, stir many feelings in avid moviegoers, none of which is likely to inspire a trip to the theater. When my colleague Owen Gleiberman called *No End in Sight* "coolheaded and devastating" in an impassioned "A" review a few weeks ago, I thought, *Great, I'll be sure to Netflix that*. I also thought, in no particular order: *Another Iraq documentary?; I already know how I feel about the war, so can't I skip this?; and Ugh—I have outrage fatigue*.

If you live in a large city, a dozen or more movies jostle for attention every week, all with advertisements bearing a quote from at least one critic who thinks it's "mind-blowing" or "a knockout!" (*Maxim* guy, you might want to raise that bar a bit.) Most of the smaller films competing for your dollars, unless they boast a star or the promotional heft of a studio-financed label like Miramax or Paramount Vantage, can barely issue a plaintive look-over-here bleat before they quietly expire, leaving no trace but a few of those sad little illustrations of parenthetical laurel leaves telling you that this movie played at some film festival somewhere, some time ago. Inevitably, we make very quick decisions about what we'll skip. Too depressing, stupid title, actor from a TV show we hate, playing only in that one-screen theater that smells, quote calling it "wacky" or "luminous"—all can be instant rule-outs. Every Friday, we thin the herd ruthlessly. *No End in Sight* has now been around for a month, an eternity for an indie documentary hoping to gain traction. Here are two reasons it should:

**1. It's made by someone who knows more than you do, so you're guaranteed to come away from it smarter.** As strange as it may sound in a world momentarily defined by the anyone-can-do-anything YouTube ethos, expertise turns out to count for something. Writer-director Charles Ferguson is not a filmmaker by trade—he's a political scientist with a degree from MIT. In *No End in Sight*, he's got a goal that's both complex and specific: He wants to explain, point by point and with scrupulous accuracy, exactly what U.S. mistakes after the start of the Iraq war led to the Iraqi insurgency. If you have all of those answers at your fingertips, you're excused, and see you next column. I didn't, and the precision with which Ferguson lays them out is riveting.

**2. This movie doesn't fetishize outrage.** It seems to have been made with the kind of calm focus that is bred by deep anger, but it always stays on mission. In an era of shout-first-ask-questions-later filmmaking, Ferguson's frosty intensity is exciting. These days, many political documentaries are the equivalent of a shaken fist. When a documentarian's need to display his sense of outrage overwhelms his exploration of whatever he's inflamed about, the movie that results, however valuable, can be dismissed too easily as a provocation or an exercise in narcissism by people who don't like its politics.

Ferguson just doesn't go there. He's not especially interested in his outrage, or yours. He's got something bigger on his mind; he wants to create an unimpeachable piece of explanatory journalism, and he does. This does not, miraculously, turn out to necessitate chasing someone with a catch-the-predator-cam or yelling at passersby with a bullhorn. Rather, it involves dozens of interviews, many with people who were direct witnesses to, and sometimes participants in, the catastrophic chain of decisions that has brought us to this moment in our history and Iraq's.

If *No End in Sight* trafficked in argumentative extremes or questionable assertions, it might be doing more business. Fox News and right-wing radio would be in full holler, creating the kind of jumped-up controversy that can get a small movie noticed. But nobody has managed to poke any real holes in Ferguson's work, perhaps because its

most damning moments come directly from the mouths of one former Bush official after another, explaining with long-overdue sobriety what went wrong and how. I don't know anyone who has seen the headlines from Iraq in the last few years and not asked, whether in anger, despair, or simple uncertainty, "What have we done?" Here's a movie that provides the beginnings of an answer. It is mind-blowing. And a knockout. Give it a try. ■



**"In an era of shout-first-and-ask-questions-later docs, the cool intensity of *No End in Sight* is riveting. Don't wait for Netflix."**



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